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of the

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180	Mrs. P. Yates	Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R.

Editorial Note

THE papers that follow constitute a record of the proceedings of the Eighteenth Conference of the Association. Written papers were, as a rule, prepared in advance by the speakers, and these have been reprinted in full. No verbatim reports of the discussions were taken, but summaries as complete and accurate as possible have been printed. Those members who sent in notes of their contributions have lightened the work of compilation, and their help is gratefully acknowledged.

Owing to various circumstances the period of time elapsing, both last year and this, between the holding of the Conference and the publication of the Proceedings has been longer than all concerned consider desirable, but it is hoped substantially to shorten this intervening period in future. On this occasion, however, advantage has been taken of the time-lag to include among Reports (pages 66 and 67) up-to-date summaries of important developments which have taken place in relation to the Rehabilitation of Libraries in Occupied Europe and to the British Union Catalogue of Periodicals—both projects which Aslib has done a great deal to promote. For the former summary we are indebted to the courtesy of Mr. Richard Seymour, of the British Council; that relating to the B.U.C.O.P. was issued by the Council of Aslib.

An index to the contents of the Report is printed at the end. Copies of the Reports of sixteen previous Conferences are still available, but the Report of the Tenth Conference is out of print. The Fifth Report contains an index to the first five; it is expected that the compilation of a cumulative index to the Proceedings to date will be undertaken soon and may be completed by the time the 1944 Report is available, though in present circumstances no promise can be made.

These Reports are indexed in the Industrial Arts Index of the H. W. Wilson Company, of New York.

31, Museum Street,
London, W.C.1, 30 *March*, 1944.

JAMES J. EATON
Hon. Editor

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The objects of the Association are: To examine, foster, and co-ordinate the activities of special libraries, information bureaux, and similar services; to act as a clearing-house for these services; to develop the usefulness and efficiency of special libraries and information bureaux under whatever titles they may function; and generally to promote, whether by conferences, meetings, or other means, the wider dissemination and the systematic use of published information.

The Association aims at assisting members who desire information of any kind to get into touch with the appropriate library or other body specializing on the subject; it does not itself attempt to build up any centralized organisation to provide the detailed information direct.

The Year's Work of Aslib, 1942-43

General

Another year of substantial activity and progress has to be reported. Indeed, the increase of work has been on such a scale that one of the chief problems that had to be faced during the year was that presented by insufficient staff and inadequate premises. One of the most gratifying features of the year's progress was the fact that it was not due to so great an extent as before to abnormal war conditions. Thus the 1942 Conference proved fruitful in practical suggestions. From it have developed the successful Special Library Training Courses, the project for a Union Catalogue of Periodicals in British Libraries, and the Index to Translations. The Chairman's visit to the United States, at the request and expense of the Rockefeller Foundation, enabled numerous valuable contacts with our friends on the other side to be made and renewed. The hopes and difficulties of Aslib were placed before the Foundation and received by them in a sympathetic and encouraging spirit. Certain of Aslib's activities cannot now be mentioned, but not a little valuable work has been done in direct connection with the war effort.

The President

Professor R. S. Hutton was elected President for the year 1942–43, and consented also to retain his place on the Council and Executive Committee. This was a piece of singular good fortune for Aslib, since Professor Hutton, one of those chiefly responsible for the formation of the Association, not only possesses unique experience of Aslib's activities, but is always generous with help and counsel.

The Council and Executive Committee

Eight meetings of the Executive Committee were held during the year, and advantage was taken of easier conditions generally to call, in addition, four full Council meetings. Special sub-committees were appointed to consider the project for a Union Catalogue of British periodicals, Aslib organisation and finance, and the 1943 Conference.

Finance and Membership

The Audited Accounts for the year ended 30th June, 1943 have been circulated to all members and were presented for acceptance at the 1943 Annual General Meeting. Membership of the Association has again risen steadily and now numbers 390, as against 328 at the same period in 1942 and 297 in 1941.

The year's augmented activities have been reflected in the finances in a marked increase in the " turnover." On the income side, membership subscriptions show a very satisfactory increase, and the comparable item of the advisory fee from the Microfilm Service has now attained a representative annual figure. As against this satisfactory feature, it must be noted that the general expenditure has very greatly exceeded the combined total of subscriptions and advisory fee. A fair proportion of this general expenditure arises from labour, materials and other items that are properly attributable to the special activities separately listed, namely Publications, Conference and Training Course. The receipts from these latter activities sufficiently outweigh the

expenditure specifically allotted to them to reduce the above-mentioned deficit to the modest sum of just under £39. The actual deficit, though small, points an unmistakable warning. Aslib is making a valiant effort to fulfil the obligations imposed upon it by the present dislocation in the even flow of information from the various sources to the normal distributing points. That is its function in peace-time as in war-time. But now the channels are disrupted and the control is more difficult and still more costly. All items of service and machinery are more expensive just when they are most needed. New services are needed and have been initiated. Some, like the Microfilm Service and the War-time Guides, pay their way with a little to spare; others involve an initial survey which has been met by *ad hoc* subventions, but leave a legacy of maintenance that has to be met out of the general funds. Measures are in hand to augment these funds to meet the requirements. The Council has no doubt that they will suffice to maintain these vital services, since the alternative of crippling the services is unthinkable. On the contrary, it looks forward to adequate support for further projects—not less vital to the present period and still more so to the period of reconstruction that lies ahead.

Conference

The Seventeenth Annual Conference was held at the Rooms of the Royal Society during the week-end of 8–9th November, 1942. Notwithstanding all the difficulties and restrictions inevitable in these days, it was one of the most successful of Aslib conferences. The very considerable delay in publishing the Report, and its production in two parts, was due to the censorship.

Union Catalogue of Periodicals

This project, which arose from the Hon. Secretary's paper at the 1942 Conference, has made a good start by obtaining the goodwill of the British Museum and the National Central Library and the interest of the Rockefeller Foundation, with whom it was discussed in New York by the Chairman. The committee appointed by Aslib to consider it included from the beginning representatives of the British Museum and the National Central Library, and representatives of other interested bodies have been co-opted. Dr. L. Newcombe is the Chairman. It is proposed that the administration of the project should be in the hands of a representative council with full powers.

Training Courses in Special Librarianship

In response to a request made by several delegates at the 1942 Conference, an emergency course of twelve lectures was organised and given in the spring of 1943. The course was attended by thirty-six students, of whom thirty took the examination which followed, twenty-five satisfying the examiners of their general competence. It must again be emphasised that these courses are not intended to do more than familiarise persons who have unexpectedly been thrown into special library work with the most essential aspects of the work, or to serve as refresher courses for students who have already some knowledge and experience. Further courses were prepared.

Location Indexes to Periodicals

The location index to current issues of European periodicals is in constant use. The complementary location index to Soviet periodicals, which was originally compiled in 1942, has been revised and extended to cover all pre-war issues subsequent to the publication of the World List of Scientific Periodicals in 1934. Shortage of staff has made it impossible to publish this index or even to put it into a permanent form, but this valuable additional material can be consulted by special arrangement.

Publications

The *Aslib Book-List* now has 389 subscribers outside the membership of Aslib, including 224 copies distributed through the British Council. The War-time Guides have proved one of the most valuable Aslib publications. Shortage of staff, and the usual war-time difficulties, has not made it easy to keep up with the demand. The Fuel and Agricultural Guides are both out of print; a second edition of the latter is in active preparation, and a third edition of the former will be undertaken if possible. The Electrical Engineering Guide and that for Engineering other than Electrical, as well as the Survey of Soviet Periodicals, are still available. More of these Guides are needed and will be undertaken if staff and funds permit. The quarterly ASLIB Information is now little more than a token publication, but even so economies in layout have made it possible to print useful material. The Aslib Memoranda are a new series, consisting of quarto duplicated sheets. So far two have been issued, the first entitled *Salvage or Storage?* dealing with the conservation of stocks of periodicals for post-war use, and the second entitled *Index to Translations*, outlining the proposal for a central index of translations.

Other Activities

The Enquiry Bureau dealt with over 900 enquiries during the year, about half of which were concerned with the location of books.

Aslib has agreed to take charge, on behalf of the British Standards Institution, of the preparation of a new abridged edition of the Universal Decimal Classification. Aslib is also participating in the supervision of a new English edition of the full classification, of which four parts have now been published, comprising the General Introduction, Auxiliary Tables and Classes 0 and 51–59.

Although the Index of Translations proposed at the 1942 Conference was outlined in No. 2 of the Aslib Memoranda and was warmly taken up by members, a number of whom agreed to collaborate, it has not been possible to make much progress with it owing, once again, to lack of staff and funds. The project is undoubtedly a most valuable one, and it is hoped that conditions will sufficiently improve during the present year to make it possible to take this scheme up with proper energy.

A private reception was held in honour of Dr. Richard Heindel on the occasion of the establishment of the American Library in London.

Once again, in closing this year's summary of Aslib's work, we have many to thank for friendly co-operation. The Institute of Transport has continued to let us have the use of its addressograph, voluntary collaborators have made the publication of the *Book-List* possible, the Location Indexes have been enlarged and maintained by the co-operation of librarians who in too many cases are already over-burdened by work. To all these and to those others too numerous to specify who have helped and encouraged us, our thanks are due and are gratefully paid.

Edward Carter
Theodore Besterman
E. Lancaster-Jones
E. M. R. Ditmas

Scientific Information

By J. G. CROWTHER

Director of the Science Department of the British Council

Science has become a very important part of modern civilization. In fact, in the opinion of many, it is already the chief part of modern civilization, and in the future the powers to be derived from it will rapidly increase.

The situation of mankind, which is arising from the progress of science, is of a new order, and differs in degree from any that has ever occurred before. In the past, science has given man the knowledge which has enabled him to turn natural forces to his own purposes. It began, in the broadest way, with such understanding as led to the control of fire, the invention of agriculture and the domestication of animals. During the past two-hundred years, a comparable advance has been made by the development of mechanical power, beginning with the steam engine.

To-day we are witnessing the fruition of this age, in the unification of the world by technique, and especially through the use of steam and internal combustion engines and electricity. In fact, we are the agents and spectators of social changes which have become necessary to adapt contemporary social forms to modern technical possibilities. The violence of the conflict is a measure of the degree of lack of adaptation.

We are at the threshold of a new age which will be vastly more disturbing than even the lively one in which we live. The progress of biology is offering the prospect of making biological changes in the nature of man himself. Who would be prepared to deny that by the year 2,000 A.D. biochemists and cytologists will have made discoveries capable of being applied to the control of the biological nature of human beings? May it not be possible, through hormone discoveries, easily to effect the change of temperament of large numbers of human beings?

Who can foresee the end of such advances during the next few centuries?

Scientists have a mighty influence on the future, and therefore must bear their part of the responsibility for it. The old idea that scientists are a-responsible, and are permitted to view with indifference whether their discoveries are turned to good or evil is out of date. The forces being released are now of such dimensions that those who discover them cannot remain indifferent to their use.

The social situation demands that the prodigious instrument of modern science be handled with knowledge and judgment, not only by scientists, but by the community as a whole.

This, in my view, is why the efficient organization and use of scientific information is one of the chief problems of the day. If mankind as a whole remains ignorant of science and its possibilities, and scientists themselves remain a minute body of ingenious but a-responsible social amateurs, what will come of the new and incomparably powerful cultural weapon—modern science? Will mankind destroy itself with its own inventions? The decline in the reproduction rate of human beings is already a biological and social problem of major magnitude. Perhaps it is the most serious problem at present confronting humanity. I have little doubt that the problem will ultimately be solved, and methods of persuading human beings to keep their kind in existence will be found. But not, perhaps, before there have been extraordinary changes in the present balance of population in the world.

It is the business of scientific information services to provide a complete and efficient index of all the scientific knowledge which is now so fateful for mankind. Scientific information is not merely a matter of convenience for a few experts, it is becoming the key to the future of humanity.

What is Britain doing to provide a satisfactory command over modern scientific information? Has she created an organization which will immediately record all advances in scientific knowledge which can be consulted at a few minutes' notice, not only in the form of technical references, but also in the form of general explanation? It seems to me that the index of scientific information should contain abstracts suitable for the instruction of statesmen, as well as references of assistance to the expert.

The technique by which scientific information should be made accessible belongs to the province of the professional bibliographer. The experts on scientific bibliography and the bibliography of science will be speaking later in the discussions and will have much of constructive value to say. I am concerned that they should be listened to, and that their advice should be acted upon.

Do our statesmen fully realize the importance of the organization of scientific information? Are they prepared to provide the means by which the expert bibliographers can make scientific information readily accessible, and a tool of vast power but under the most sensitive control, for the benefit of humanity?

What evidence is there that Britain is preparing to play her full part in the world-use and mastery of scientific information? What evidence is there that she is organizing it well enough to ensure her own survival?

British libraries are in general far too few, and quite inadequately endowed. The staffs are insufficient and they are scandalously underpaid. Anyone who is dependent on technical libraries knows how difficult it is to secure a comprehensive view of scientific and technical literature at any place outside London. And then, in London, while there are some good scientific and technical libraries, it does not necessarily follow that the information stored in their shelves may easily be consulted.

Several of our great libraries belong to Government Departments. It seems that in some Government Departments it is thought suitable that the persons who actually serve and wait upon the reader should not be educated. One sometimes has the impression that worthy ex-sergeants and ex-bo'suns are fumbling among the tomes of Comptes Rendus and Zentrallblatts and Bulletins, doing their willing but intellectually unperspicacious best to find what one wants.

It would seem to be obvious that everyone in a library, from the door-keeper to the librarian (for even the door-keeper has to answer many elementary bibliographical questions), should have received a secondary education.

In addition to making existing libraries as convenient and efficient as possible, the requirements of the country as a whole should be reviewed, and plans prepared for an adequate national system of scientific and technical information. This should be drawn up in relation to plans for the general development of science and industry in the country.

Britain can have no future as a first-class power unless she modernizes her scientific and technical resources. The modern means of communication and production have limited the possibility of small countries possessing great power and potentialities. Modern technical means have made the continental masses the convenient units of organization in present conditions. Consequently, Britain, a small island, with a relatively small population, cannot retain her place, even as an equal, with the great continental technical powers, unless she makes herself the focus of a closely knit Commonwealth. It is more difficult to organize the scattered British Commonwealth than to organize

compact continents. It makes an even greater demand on scientific and technical means. Hence Britain will not retain an equal place among the great nations unless she cultivates science and technology to an even higher pitch than her major sister nations.

The creation of a satisfactory system of scientific information is a necessary part of the development of an adequate national system of scientific research and industry. It should be connected with the extension of British universities and industrial research institutions upon which the future of the country depends.

It is evident, too, that it must be part of a general organization of scientific information for the whole British Commonwealth. In a recent interview in the United States, Sir John Anderson referred to discussions on the foundation of a British Commonwealth Scientific Office, with which the United States and other nations might collaborate.

Such perspectives evidently coincide with that of the formation of a British Commonwealth Scientific Information Service, which could be related to, and perhaps be part of, a World Information Service.
That is the end to which all contemporary developments point.

There are so many problems of first-class importance in connection with the organization of science, and the development of scientific research, and scientific industry, both from the national, the Commonwealth, and the international point-of-view, that it seems very desirable that the Prime Minister should form a Cabinet Committee to study the matter and inspire the preparation of suitable plans. He has lately initiated action in connection with the profoundly important problem of language, and this should be accompanied by similar action in connection with science, which is the sphere of human endeavour where the interchange of knowledge and ideas is already advanced, and where the extension of mutual understanding between mankind is easiest, and offers the earliest fruits. Satisfactory solutions of the problem of the organization of scientific information will not be obtained unless they are sought in comprehensive terms of fundamental importance.

The problems of scientific information are impressed on my colleagues and myself in the British Council. We are concerned with the information of peoples overseas on the British contributions to science. Our work would be greatly facilitated by better information services. In certain directions we have initiated developments, in the absence of existing activities of the appropriate kind. For instance, we have started a monthly science news-letter for distribution overseas. Already we circulate 47,000 copies every month. This includes issues in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French and Arabic, and editions printed in six different countries.

The Council distributes large quantities of scientific periodicals and books overseas. This draws on us numerous scientific bibliographical enquiries, and our difficulties in having these quickly and effectively answered impresses on us the need for improvement in British scientific information services.

It seems to me that there should exist in Britain a service which can give rapid and critical answers to any request for books and periodicals. This involves the production of carefully classified lists of books. It seems to me that in this direction the valuable ASLIB work could be greatly extended. There should be a card-index of books so cross-referenced that any normal enquiry can be answered within a few minutes. Classification should be by degree of difficulty, style, and critical appraisement, as well as by title and subject. I would like to see a great index which contains reviews of books, in addition to bibliographical details. The reviews, say perhaps 250 words long, and printed on the back of the card, should be by the leading scientists in the

nation. The index would be a repository of instructed opinion, and a vast scientific literary work of style and distinction. I imagine the country's scientists would be proud to co-operate in such an activity.

I have conferred with my colleagues on needs that they have found in connection with our work. Miss Tripp, who is the assistant editor of *Monthly Science News*, and Secretary of the Anglo-Soviet Scientific Collaboration Committee, is of opinion that there should be a Library of International Science in every country, with a staff of trained scientists and linguists. Working in close conjunction with such a library there should be a Central Translating Bureau. All important foreign papers should be immediately translated when they are received, and the translations made available to subscribers. Less important foreign papers would be abstracted. This is particularly important in the case of languages which are not well known in this country. At present Russian and Turkish journals are sometimes not even classified, as there is no-one on the Library staff to deal with them.

The Centralization of Abstracting Services is desirable. Instead of separate scientific institutions in each country trying to abstract the world literature in any particular sphere, all abstracts relating to a special subject, should be pooled and one comprehensive internationally compiled abstract journal should be published in all important languages.

It is desirable that librarians should exchange frequent visits with foreign libraries.

Out-of-date science books should be removed from library shelves and only kept for historical reference, to be produced upon request.

Library staff should comprise trained scientists to assist the public in the understanding of science.

Lectures on science for the public should be arranged in conjunction with science libraries, and courses of reading should be recommended.

Dr. Howard Jones, the Head of the Council's Medical Department and Editor of the British Medical Bulletin, has pointed out to me that medical bibliography includes a wide range of subjects which, in spite of considerable divergencies, have an essential unity. The clinician cannot neglect relevant laboratory work, and the laboratory worker must follow relevant clinical literature.

Medical literature is not well represented in Science Libraries, and is usually available in exclusively medical libraries.

The largest medical library in the British Commonwealth is that of a private society, the Royal Society of Medicine, which possesses 160,000 books and more than 1,000 current sets of periodicals. This is in contrast with the situation in the United States, where the Government department, the Surgeon-General's office at Washington, has the largest medical library in the world. It possesses about 400,000 books and more than 2,000 current sets of periodicals.

The absence of any British Government Medical Library of equal magnitude is striking, for it is not to be expected that any private library can command the resources necessary for expansion in subscriptions, buildings and equipment.

The introduction of modern mechanical equipment for quick handling of references is expensive, and it is evident that in the future great libraries should be housed in bomb-proof buildings, which will require a big building programme.

The flood of medical publications has reached menacing proportions in recent years, and it is almost impossible for any one medical worker to keep closely in touch with world publications on his subject.

Every resource of scientific and mechanical invention should be utilized to enable him to control this spate of information.

The United States leads the world in medical bibliography and librarianship. Medical workers in all countries are deeply in debt to the American Medical Association for publishing the Quarterly Cumulative Index Medicus ; the indispensable tool of all serious medical workers.

Medical literature requires rationalization. It is possible, however, that this cannot be achieved without a corresponding rationalization of medical services and long over-due reforms of medical education and organization.

In fact, the adequate organization of medical information cannot be separated from the general problems of organization of medicine as a whole.

Mr. Louis Rapkine has given me some details of the interesting Centre of Information, which was started in Paris in 1939 by the French Government's National Centre of Scientific Research. When general mobilization was declared, the military call-up was very complete. Few scientists under the age of 35 were reserved from the services. Hence a large part of the scientists of France, serving in the forces, were cut off from the usual libraries and sources of scientific information. Even when they were engaged on scientific work in the research establishments of the army, and navy, they were frequently starved of information, for the establishments were often in out-of-the-way places, where few scientific journals had formerly been sent, and there was no tradition of scientific information.

The relatively few young men who had been reserved were too busy to keep up with the literature of their respective branches of science.

Thus the scientists both in and out of the military forces suddenly found that, for various reasons, they were unable to keep up-to-date.

At the same time, the Government more than ever felt the urgency of assimilating the world's output of scientific information, in order to use all that could be of value in the war effort.

Like so many good and rational things, the establishment of an institute of documentation to meet these needs was not undertaken until crisis had arrived. However, prompt action was taken. It was decided that two qualities which would be essential in the new institute were comprehensiveness, so that everything could be glanced at and nothing important be overlooked ; and speed, so that scientists could be kept informed with the minimum delay. A service of abstracts was started. The feature of these was their shortness. They were ruthlessly designed to serve the expert. In this way, a large number of abstracts could be put in a small space. They consisted of two or three lines which could be prepared quickly, and distributed within one or two months of publication of the original paper.

The National Centre of Scientific Research appointed the distinguished physicist Professor Pierre Auger (discoverer of the Auger effect and of giant cosmic ray showers) to organize and direct the new Centre of Documentation. He was given a completely free hand, to create the Centre in the way he thought best. He did this with remarkable speed and efficiency, and his performance provides an instructive example of the gifts for administration often possessed by research scientists of high creative ability. They carry the orderly, and yet original and intelligent methods of scientific research into their creative administrative task, and swiftly beat the professional administrator at his own game. It may, of course, be that the reason why research scientists should do so well in administration (when the war is over, wonderful examples of this will be related), is that they refrained from administration because they were too intelligent. Anyhow, Professor Auger's success was instructive.

He appointed heads of sections to deal with each of the main branches of science, such as mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry, etc., and he gave each of the heads a free hand, especially in choosing their staff and subdividing their respective subjects.

The Centre made comprehensive use of microfilms. It supplied on request positives of the pages of any paper noticed in its Bulletin, and it also acted as a library of original manuscripts, so that microfilms of these could be provided even before they had been published in any journal, thus saving printer's and editor's delays. The cheapness and effectiveness of such microfilm services are now widely known and appreciated.

The total cost of the Centre was remarkably small, being less than £6,000.

The success of the whole project was due to :

1. The complete freedom and independence of the Director ;
2. The large amount of initiative given to the heads of sections ;
3. The large staff engaged for the actual work of abstracting. Many of them were not of French nationality.
4. An efficient, though numerically small editorial staff ;
5. A small efficient revision staff, who read and corrected all the abstracts.

Some gentlemen here will remember Professor Auger's visit to England in 1940 to discuss documentation.

I had the pleasure of visiting his Centre in April, 1940, and was greatly impressed by the intelligence and efficiency of the arrangements, and how much was being done with modest resources.

Unfortunately, the Centre of Documentation, like the rest of the renaissance of science in France, came too late to provide that scientific strength which is the foundation of the power of contemporary nations. France was overwhelmed.

But fortunately, Professor Auger was one of those French scientists who had the will and the enterprise to escape. He is now in North America, and, no doubt, will have a distinguished part in the coming restoration of science in his native country.

We have been discussing so far the provision of improved bibliographical equipment for working scientists and doctors. Another type of scientific information is that intended for the general reader, and which is made accessible to him through books, newspapers, radio and cinema.

The systematic provision of scientific information for these purposes has scarcely begun. The general problem was reviewed at a recent conference held by the British Association for the Advancement of Science on the topic of *Science and the Citizen*. At this conference, Mr. Ritchie Calder read a paper on *A Plan for an Institute of Scientific Information*. He recalled the discussions held just before the outbreak of the war and encouraged by the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation and the Rockefeller Foundation, on methods of pooling scientific knowledge and making it more accessible.

Mr. Calder envisages a British Institute of Information which will supply journalists and others with scientific information which will be instructive without being dull, and accurate without being pedantic, and will convert the wide public interest in science into a genuine social instrument, which will help mankind to utilize science to its own maximum benefit.

This institute would work in close connection with similar institutes in other countries, so that an international pool of scientific information would be established.

This would be prepared in a form which could be given to the news agencies and newspapers, and to the radio and film organizations. These organizations would be able to telephone to the Institute at any time and be able to secure a reasonably accurate account of any scientific discovery or development at an hour or two's notice.

The institute would have a panel of expert advisers in all branches of science, and a staff who could produce material which could be converted by scientific journalists into news and leader articles, broadcasts, cinema news reels, etc.

At the same conference, Dr. Arnold Raestad, of Norway, gave an account of the work of the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation and the Rockefeller Foundation. The committee of the International Institute, which included Dr. Julian Huxley and M. Henri Laugier, recommended the creation of an international centre for scientific information, which should have two main objectives. The first would be a continuous recording of the progress of science, and the second the mobilization, as need and demand arise, of information on any scientific point of current interest. It would organize co-operation between the original scientific specialist, the intermediary scientific exponent, and finally the journalist or popularizer.

The committee worked out a draft organization in detail, and was of opinion that its work should be carried out through the linking and extension of existing organizations.

Dr. Raestad is of the opinion that in reorganizing the world, the United Nations have no more fundamental task and no more urgent one, than to implement a proper international co-operation in the adequate presentation of the results and methods of science to the peoples of all countries.

That seems to be very true. Arrangements for a proper international bibliographical and scientific information service should be incorporated in all general world treaties, and world committees of nations for the preservation of peace. The most urgent task of bibliographers and scientific informationists would seem to be to get their proposals on to the agenda for the forthcoming settlements of the world, and to have their proposals ready.

In order to achieve this, they must work out their own plans and persuade the statesmen of their respective countries to take appropriate action. It is evident that they should discuss these matters at the earliest possible moment with those ministers most concerned with them.

DISCUSSION

The Chair was taken by Professor R. S. Hutton, who said that for the development of improved information services we depended ultimately upon the individual user realising and expressing his demands. Sir J. J. Thomson in his Aslib Presidential address (1929)[1] illustrated the rapid change which had taken place in the output of scientific publications by telling us that the first "abstract" was prepared in 1877, and at that time it was possible for a scientist to read all publications on his own subject, whereas in 1928 he estimated that he ought to have read 5,680—and the cry was "still they come." Professor Hutton recalled that Aslib was founded largely to meet those conditions, but had since shouldered a substantial number of supplementary tasks, many of which could have been handled by the Conjoint Board of Scientific Societies. It was a sad day when that Board was wound up by the Royal Society.

Mr. Theodore Besterman, who expressed himself as one hundred per cent. in agreement with all that Mr. Crowther had said, drew a comparison between British medical libraries and the Library of the Surgeon-General at Washington. The new U.S. Union Catalogue of Periodicals was a tool of first-rate bibliographical importance.

Mr. W. K. Brasher asked if any scheme such as that which Mr. Crowther had suggested could be implemented without Cabinet backing. Mr. Crowther replied that schemes of the kind must be investigated at international conferences. Now was the unique opportunity.

[1] Sixth Aslib Conference Report, 1929, pp. 14–15.

Dr. Alexander King described briefly how the Royal Society's British Commonwealth Science Committee had been instituted to examine problems of scientific co-ordination between Great Britain and the Dominions.

Mr. J. J. Eaton said that Mr. Crowther had outlined what could be done on the bibliographical side to organise scientific information services internationally. But, as he had also shown, the problems involved were not solely bibliographical: the public must be helped to understand scientific matters, and this had to be done through the medium of the Press.

Mr. Crowther had spoken of a plan put forward recently by Mr. Ritchie Calder to establish a British Institute to form an international pool of scientific information. Something similar had been outlined to Aslib by Sir Richard Gregory nine years ago[2]: and in March, 1943, Mr. Henry Martin had put before the British Association his scheme for a Science Press Bureau, to provide a central source from which the Press could obtain quickly up-to-date, accurate information about all scientific matters, as far as possible in non-technical terms.

The value of such a project was obvious, but were any practical steps yet being taken to bring it into being? Aslib should consider what it could do to help in promoting a scheme of the kind. Regarding the News Letter dealing with scientific matters which Mr. Crowther had said was widely distributed overseas by the British Council, Mr. Eaton asked, considering how much our own unhappily neglected citizens needed such information, why could not the British Council distribute the same or a similar periodical in Great Britain?

Mr. Crowther replied that it was not the British Council, but H.M. Treasury, which had decided to ban the distribution at home of the Monthly Science News Letter. As to the proposed scheme, he suggested that the Aslib Council should draw up a plan for co-ordination of scientific information.

Mr. B. Fullman suggested the creation of a Standing Committee to consider the problem.

Mr. Eric N. Simons said that the Government was interested in the co-ordination of scientific information only in so far as this affected efficiency in war and in economic production. Therefore, he urged that Aslib should (*a*) put forward a scheme covering post-war planning of scientific information on the widest scale; and (*b*) organise a special conference to consider it.

Professor Hutton thanked Mr. Crowther on behalf of the Conference for his inspiring and instructive address. He then put to the meeting the following resolution, which was carried unanimously:

> That this meeting desires to ask the Council of Aslib to emphasise the importance of the development of improved national and international scientific information services, and to urge the Government to provide all the stimulus and financial help possible for the purpose.

[2] Eleventh Aslib Conference Report, 1934, pp. 17–28.

Proposal for an International Library Clearing-House

By THEODORE BESTERMAN

This war has demonstrated beyond any possibility of further doubt the necessity for large-scale and long-term planning. It has finally taught us that no problem is so difficult that it cannot be solved by co-operative effort, given goodwill and a sufficiently powerful incentive. This new attitude naturally extends to the world of books and libraries. Many great enterprises which have long been discussed in a more or less hopeless way are now again being brought to the fore, but this time with a determination that they should be carried to fruition. The whole problem of microphotography applied to books and periodicals is an instructive example. Years of discussion and propaganda produced a minimum of result in this country, but the war not only showed the desirability of such an undertaking but proved its necessity and finally provided the support which enabled us to establish the Aslib Microfilm Service. In addition, new projects have had to be devised to deal with the disorganisation and destruction caused by the war. One such proposal, offering a solution of one specific part of a larger total problem, forms the subject of this paper.

After the war many of the combatant nations, on both sides, and both great and small, will be confronted by the fact that they have lost a certain proportion of the books in their libraries. This proportion will naturally vary greatly, but

all those nations which will have been under fire will have suffered to some extent. Many libraries, including a number of great ones, both in the quantity and quality of their contents, have already been wholly or partly destroyed. The total loss of books amounts to millions in Great Britain alone, and is certainly even greater in other parts of the war zone. Clearly, unless education and research are to continue under very grave difficulties, in some cases well-nigh insuperable ones, something drastic will have to be done about this situation. It is scarcely necessary to point out that the rehabilitation of libraries is not a mechanical process of accumulation which can be left to time and chance, for books are not merely physical objects standing on shelves—they are the indispensable tools of teaching and research. In short, plans have to be prepared on a scale commensurate with the size of the problem. True, the situation I am describing already exists, but unfortunately little can now be done about it on a national scale and nothing at all internationally; on the other hand, preparations on an adequate scale can and must be made at once for the tasks which await us after destruction has ceased if peace is not to find us unprepared. The foundations must now be laid and the materials prepared so that building can start as soon as the signal is given.

Some parts of the difficulty may be overcome by library reorganisation and amalgamation within countries; a development of co-operatively planned library specialisation would avoid the present excessive overlapping and duplication; co-operative purchasing programmes will undoubtedly be more widely adopted; and a great extension of inter-library loans and co-operation generally would also be of material assistance. Still, all these things are long-term remedies and cannot be more than superficial in their influence on the immediate difficulties with which we are confronted. They cannot become effective contributions to the polity of libraries until the fundamental problems of library rehabilitation and re-stocking have been solved both nationally and internationally, a problem which is too big and too widespread, and above all too urgent, to be solved by mere improvements in technique and procedure, however far-reaching and desirable in themselves. More positive and more comprehensive measures will have to be adopted.

Apart from reprints and photomechanical reproductions the book resources of the world at any given moment are static; and as the destruction of books already runs into millions no reproduction project, be it as ambitious as it may, can by itself solve more than a minute section of the problem—though an important one, to which I shall return presently. Thus it is clear that the restocking of libraries can be accomplished only by a redistribution of the existing population of books, remembering that this population is not necessarily to be found only in existing public and semi-public libraries and that personal collections can also be drawn from by voluntary contributions. It is with this redistribution that I am here chiefly concerned.

First, however, one related matter must be touched upon. It may well be that the Nazis and their friends have looted libraries in the countries they have occupied. The general question of reparations and the like is a political one with which I am not here concerned, but the principle of the restitution of stolen books (as of works of art) must certainly be accepted; I have taken it for granted throughout.

One thing concerned with this problem will command universal assent: at all costs the uncontrolled commercialisation of library re-stocking must be avoided. If librarians were to go independently to the booksellers and the auction-rooms for their replacements the only result would be that the larger part of their lists would remain unobtainable, while the prices of all books would be forced up to absurd levels. The experience of the nineteen-twenties demonstrated this fact beyond a doubt, even though destruction during the war of 1914-1918 was much more limited than it has already been in this war.

The restoration of the Louvain library, for which Germany was made responsible under the Versailles treaty, led to the ransacking of bookshops in many countries by German government agents, and this alone had a marked inflationary effect on the book-market. If such a process were to be repeated on a many times larger scale, and on an internationally competitive basis, the consequences might be disastrous. It is well known in the book trade that many shrewd booksellers are already accumulating stocks, buying them in many cases at auction at most ridiculous prices. The implication is obvious, but so is the moral. Many hundreds of thousands of books are in booksellers' hands ; purchases from these stocks will of course have to be made ; what is important is that such purchases should be made by librarians acting in concert, not in competition.

This is true even of contemporary books (in the widest sense), which have also been destroyed in great numbers, together with the type and plates from which they might otherwise have been reprinted, and the available stocks of which are being bought and put aside by a considerable number of uncoordinated agencies (apart from booksellers). The systematic conservation and accumulation of periodicals, in particular, has for long been promoted by Aslib within the narrow limits of its financial resources ; and this procedure has more recently been followed by various other organisations, most effectively by the American Library Association, operating with funds provided by the Rockefeller Foundation. Similarly, some of the allied governments in London are making considerable purchases for the benefit of their libraries at home ; nor ought we to forget occupied British territories such as the Channel Islands, and others for which we have a direct responsibility. (It would be interesting to know, for instance, whether H.M.S.O. is putting aside stocks of official publications for such purposes). The co-ordination of all these efforts is one of the most urgent problems with which we are faced. For lack of such co-ordination there is now a danger that all the available stocks of many books and periodicals may be absorbed, to the detriment of new casualties and late-comers. True, Aslib has tried to induce learned and scientific bodies to maintain or acquire decentralised stocks of their publications, and some results have been obtained on these lines. This again, however, is only a very partial solution and a small part of the problem.

One of the first things that will happen after the war, in this field, will be the launching of appeals for donations of books. It would be most unfortunate if such appeals were allowed to go forth indiscriminately. If they were, the result would be an undignified and, what is much worse, an inefficient scramble for the available books, country competing against country and library against library. Some evidence of this has already been seen in the narrowly sectional appeals which have been issued by certain localities and even by specific institutions, which have taken somewhat undue advantage of very natural and understandable sympathies, to the detriment of other equally deserving bodies which are acting with more restraint. In short, it is extremely desirable that appeals for books should be united and centralised, so far as possible, in something of the same way that has been followed with so much advantage in the United States in the substitution of the community chest system for repeated and indiscriminate charitable appeals. The practical execution of the co-ordinated international plan would no doubt have to be on a local basis.

Such a co-ordinated system of book collection must not seek to exclude direct personal generosity. Individuals and organisations specially interested in specific countries or libraries will no doubt continue to make gifts to them. It would, however, be preferable that such donations also should pass through the central organisation, or its local centre, for purposes of record. If this is not practicable, then at least lists should be supplied, by the donor or the recipient, to prevent otherwise inevitable overlapping and duplication.

A large number of clubs, canteens and the like have been established during the war for the use of the Forces. Many of these have " libraries " attached to them. Of most of these collections of books the least said the better, but many of them do consist of, or at least include, useful books. The number of such books is very considerable, since the book-salvage campaign alone has yielded many hundreds of thousands of volumes for this purpose. What is to happen to all these books after the war? It would clearly be useful if they could be sent to a central organisation for disposal. Otherwise there can be little doubt that the good will vanish with the bad.

It is not enough, however, for books to be efficiently collected; that is only the preliminary to an at least equally important process, namely, their allocation. One of the greatest evils of unco-ordinated appeals for books, followed by similarly unco-ordinated distribution, would be that one centre and even one library would receive several copies of a given book (of which it might not even be in need), while another centre or library (possibly badly wanting it) would receive none. This fact alone is a sufficient argument for the establishment of a central point through which such duplicates could be cleared, even if a centralised appeal system were not to be adopted. Further, many books would not go to those libraries for which they are most appropriate. In short, it would obviously be a great benefit if all emergency book donations, after a minimum of local scrutiny in appropriate cases, flowed into a central clearing-house, there underwent expert examination, sorting and listing, and then flowed out again in a planned and controlled manner.

The centralised organisation of the collection and allocation of books would be a valuable contribution towards the systematic restocking of libraries; but even that process would not go very far towards a complete solution of the problem. Considerable experience has now been gained of the type of book that is likely to be produced by such appeals. For instance, in the book-salvage campaign recently conducted throughout the country as part of paper-salvage generally, the restocking of damaged libraries has been specially stressed; all books so recovered pass through the hands of specially appointed local committees of scrutiny, which reserve all books which they consider likely to be of use to libraries; lists of these books are then drawn up (or, at any rate, are supposed to be drawn up) and are sent to the Committee for the Recovery of Books and Manuscripts, which meets under the auspices of the Library Association. The experience gained in this and other ways emphatically underlines the desirability of some such method of organisation; it also shows that while useful material does turn up in fair quantities (something over 2 per cent of the whole number obtained not counting books allocated to the British and Allied Forces), in general the books given represent a kind of floating population of comparatively limited interest to the librarian, whose most urgent need is for the replacing of standard and rare books and periodicals. At the same time, the value of organised collection and allocation must not be underrated, for the most " ordinary " works, such as educational publications, are needed, so complete has been the destruction of the libraries of some universities and other teaching organisations.

One great difficulty caused by this procedure results from the size of this book-recovery campaign. The 2 per cent just mentioned as retained after preliminary sorting has so far yielded about 750,000 volumes, and book-salvage is going on all the time. Local librarians, short of staff even for their normal functions, are struggling with little success to store and to list these books; moreover, some places have no libraries, let alone librarians, so that the work has to be done by the best talent locally available. Even in some towns the pressure is so great that quantities of books are already being disposed of in ways short of the ideal. A central *ad hoc* organisation, with storage space and transport facilities for such books as positively cannot be retained locally, is another urgent desideratum—or rather, this is another aspect of the same need for the central organisation of the whole attack on these problems.

Another useful action to be taken by all libraries would be the systematic contribution of their duplicates to the central clearing-house. As all librarians know, especially those who have had experience of old-established libraries, the duplication inevitably produced by block donations and even by indiscriminate purchasing, is very considerable and extends to rarities of the first order. Of course old-fashioned librarians, to many of whom possession is more important than utility, will find it difficult to part with any of their books, even when they are no direct use to their libraries ; in some instances special legislation will be required, as in the case of the British Museum Library ; but that very great benefits would accrue from the systematic and international turning out of duplicates there can be no doubt whatever. It is worth adding that such a step would have a positive and direct value to the bigger libraries in the urgently needed saving of space, a problem which has become a nightmare to many librarians. Nor would this benefit be a trifling one, for the number of duplicates in each and every one of the world's greatest libraries probably extends to six figures, including a high proportion of rare and even of intrinsically valuable works.

Even this step, however, would by no means solve the whole problem. For instance, periodicals are one of the types of books which it is most urgent and desirable to replace from among those destroyed during the war ; yet a periodical is precisely the kind of publication which is least often duplicated within a single library. The same is true of the older works of reference and, though not to the same extent, of most scarce books. If, therefore, the problem of the rehabilitation of library stocks is to be tackled seriously, a still more drastic procedure will have to be embarked upon. Librarians will have to learn to look on their responsibilities as not limited by the four walls within which they live and have their being. If learning has no boundaries we must not be too narrow when it comes to the books which embody that learning. In short, I propose that the definition of a duplicate should not be limited to a single library but should extend to carefully planned regions. Thus, if a given periodical does not exist at all in, say, Belgium, but there are four copies in, say, the south of England, then one of those copies should be given to the most suitable Belgian library ; and, of course, the other way about, for I should like to emphasise that this whole plan is conceived as transcending national boundaries.

Numerous examples could be cited, even without taking war destruction into consideration, to convince anybody who feels sceptical about the general assumption on which this proposal is based. Only the other day I came across a French bibliography of which there are five copies in the Bibliothèque Nationale alone, but not one in this country. And such a sceptic can easily put the matter to the test for himself by examining any union catalogue or any bibliography in which located copies are cited. Such works, for instance, as the *Short-title catalogue of books printed in England . . .* 1475-1640, in the field of rare books, and the *World list of scientific periodicals*, in that of contemporary utility, provide examples on almost every page of books copies of which are entirely lacking in one country although several, sometimes many, copies are to be found in another. Thus, of the 36,000 known contemporary scientific periodicals recorded in the *World list*, no fewer than 11,000 were not known to exist in Great Britain. Similar statistics are provided by the sample universal catalogue of books compiled at the Library of Congress. And in the smaller countries the position is naturally even worse. Certainly nobody will wish to perpetuate such a state of affairs if it can be put right without serious injury to anyone.

An essential pre-requisite to all this would have to be an agreed definition of what is to constitute an " available duplicate " for this purpose. The mere fact that a library possesses two copies of a given book does not automatically make one of these copies superfluous. In large libraries, for instance, several copies of standard works of reference are needed to enable the staff to do their work.

Again, old books cannot be confidently described as duplicates without minute examination. Admittedly books of this kind ought not to be incorporated without such examination, but unfortunately only too often they have been so incorporated. Moreover, our knowledge of the finer points of old books is constantly increasing. The position is not so difficult, however, as considerations of this kind might lead one to suppose, for we are here primarily concerned with books of direct utility, not so much with those of antiquarian value.

It cannot be disputed that this proposal for the zoning of library resources is likely to arouse disagreeable feelings in many people, though less so in enlightened librarians than in those less intimately familiar with the problem—which is fundamentally no new one. Yet, though its details will have to be worked out with great care, it is a perfectly practicable plan; indeed, this project would merely consist in the rationalisation on a large scale of the casual exchanges of duplicates which have always taken place. In any case, be the plan ever so ambitious and were it even distasteful, the fundamental question, after all, is this: is it possible to restore libraries in any other way? I think this question must be answered in the negative; if so, dare we hesitate?

When all this has been done the residual problem of the absolutely rare work will, of course, remain. This can only be solved by reproduction of some kind, the photostat, the microphotograph, or even, in suitable cases, one or other or several of the photomechanical printing processes. An internationally and centrally organised attack on the whole field of photographic reproduction of rare works (in the widest sense, including books and periodicals) has long been desiderated. This problem, at least, is fairly straightforward, though certainly big enough. First it would be necessary to define an "absolutely" rare work. If the principle of international library zoning be accepted this definition would present no difficulty: a rare work would be one of which fewer copies are in existence than there are zones or groups of zones, according to the type of work in question. In the absence of such a zoning plan, some other definition could easily be worked out, on a continental basis, for instance. A list would be drawn up in accordance with whatever definition is agreed on (and a very considerable list it would be) and published, with a price-list for each of the available methods of reproduction. In time all works for which a sufficient demand was expressed would be reproduced. Such a scheme, if efficiently organised, could be self-supporting; it might be better, however, partly to subsidise it, so that the smaller libraries, and even individuals, could obtain the works they need. Here is another task for the proposed central organisation.

I should like to emphasise that I am discussing this whole problem purely and simply as one of war and post-war emergency; but it is abundantly clear that such an organisation as I am asking for would have many permanent tasks to fulfil. It could at last undertake the long overdue organisation of international exchanges, especially, but by no means exclusively, of government and academic publications, so important and so neglected a field; it could tackle the generations-old dream of co-operative cataloguing, with the immense increase of efficiency and decrease in overhead costs which the Library of Congress system has so amply displayed; it could organise wide union catalogues and bibliographies; it could make real and effective efforts to cope with the duplication and waste of energy and money now so prevalent in such fields as those of international bibliography and abstracting; and many other projects will spring readily to the mind of every scholar, librarian and bibliographer. All these, however, are other stories to be developed in other places; I am concerned here only with the immediate, the urgent problem of the rehabilitation of libraries from the effects of the war.

It only remains, therefore, to consider the procedure by which such an international library clearing-house could be set up, should it be approved in principle. Certain obvious difficulties at once emerge. Such an organisation must be international in scope to the fullest extent if it is to be really adequate;

it will therefore apply at once to conqueror and conquered, to countries which have been severely damaged, to some which have been less injured and to some which have not been under fire at all. In other words, some countries will give a great deal more than they will receive. This point could easily be overstressed, however; for instance, there are many thousands of books the only surviving copies of which are all in European libraries and which, therefore, can never be acquired by the libraries of, say, America; the present plan would present a happy answer to this otherwise insoluble problem. Still, it is clear that a scheme of this kind needs money (though not so much as would appear at first sight) and might be the better for official endorsement. The ideas embodied in this paper were, therefore, submitted to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and I think I may be allowed to say that he is in general sympathy with them; he referred them to a committee representative of the United Nations, which meets, with Professor Ernest Barker as chairman, under the auspices of the British Council; and I am not altogether unhopeful that it may prove possible to establish, in an authoritative way, an international cultural body, parallel within its sphere to the International Labour Office, which could undertake the tasks some of which have been here outlined.

As a first step it might be well to appoint a small committee to work out a detailed plan of action. It is realised that international plans must be based on national ones in those countries which are free to make them; in this country some steps have already been taken, steps of which the present Conference is one. May I emphasise, however, the fact that this problem is, in part at any rate, an urgent one? So many books and periodicals are being destroyed every day, so many are being thrown out by the most unexpected organisations, so many bodies are pressing so many conflicting interests, that immediate action is necessary if our last state is not to be worse than our first.

I referred at the beginning of this paper to the new creative spirit animating the nation. Unfortunately this new drive and energy is showing signs of flagging as the military situation improves—in other words, as the incentive loses some of its power. The duty lies upon us to show that peace is more creative than war; if we fail in this there can be no hope for our civilisation, a civilisation of which books form the keystone. "Books have that strange quality, that, being of the frailest and tenderest matter, they out-last brass, iron, and marble." This is a fine thought, finely expressed, but three centuries have passed over Drummond of Hawthornden, centuries which have witnessed the withering of many a fine thought by the internal combustion engine. Fine thoughts will no longer do; if we really want books to survive brass and iron we must act, and act quickly.

Restoration of the Belgian Public Libraries

By JEAN TIMMERMANS

Professor at the University of Brussels, Head of the University Section, Belgian Board of Education

Generally speaking, Public Libraries in Belgium appear to have suffered comparatively little up to the present under German occupation, since Louvain University Library alone was destroyed at the time of the invasion, but naturally one cannot forecast what may happen before the liberation of the country. Moreover, the Belgian Libraries have been deprived of all periodicals and books from Great Britain, the two Americas and Russia in particular, and we know that they have not always been able to acquire even those published on the Continent.

We shall examine in turn the problems arising from (*a*) the destruction of the Louvain University Library, and (*b*) the gaps in other libraries caused by Enemy Occupation.

(*a*) The Louvain University Library. This library was already destroyed once during the sack of the town by the Germans in 1914; it was magnificently reconstructed to the plans of the American architect Warren, and its collections built up again, thanks partly to German reparations and partly to gifts from institutions and individuals all over the world.

At the time of the invasion in 1940, the library contained some 900,000 volumes, of which only 15,000 could be saved, and these are in the hands of private persons. Likewise of 800 MSS, only thirteen were saved.

Belgian authorities in Belgium have up to the present apportioned credits of approximately 8½ million Belgian francs—a sum patently insufficient for the rebuilding—but this question can only be settled after the war.

As to the collections of books and periodicals, these ought obviously to be made good as far as possible by those responsible, that is to say, by the German Government, but we must necessarily be able to count also on the generous help of our friends in Allied countries. Mr. van Cauwelaert, President of the Belgian House of Representatives, who is now in the United States, thought of appealing to American intellectual circles. There is also some question at present of getting this University adopted by an American University. A Commission of Technicians, under the chairmanship of Prof. Ernest Barker, on behalf of the Committee of Allied Ministers for Education, set up by Mr. Butler, is of the opinion that it would be wiser not to make a special appeal for the reconstitution of such libraries, but to envisage the creation of an international "Pool" whose contents would be divided after the war among the different countries according to their needs[1]. It must be remembered also that the "Free" University of Brussels, being at present occupied by the enemy, it is difficult to forecast in what state the Library will be found.

(*b*) Hiatuses Resulting from the Period of Occupation.

(1) *Books*. The Belgian Government is making every effort to fill in the gaps in Belgian library collections resulting from enemy occupation. It has concerned itself particularly in keeping up to date the Bibliothèque Royale de Bruxelles and the libraries of the four universities of Brussels, Ghent, Liége and Louvain. To this effect it wishes to procure, for the five libraries, all the principal books, pamphlets, etc., published in Great Britain since the beginning of 1940.

In order to draw up this list, a Sub-Commission of the British Association, of which I have the honour to be President, has been able to make good use of the quarterly lists published by Aslib and is completing them in the field of literature, politics, history, etc., with the kind collaboration of the British Council. We hope in this way to compile a standard list of a thousand titles which we propose to acquire and which may serve as a guide for the purchases of other countries. We wish to build up also a stock of works representative of English life in its various aspects, as well as the outstanding treatises in the different branches of human knowledge published in Great Britain during the last twenty years, unless these works already figure on the above-mentioned lists. We will thus certainly meet the wishes of intellectual circles in our country, who will be more anxious than ever, on their liberation from the clutches of the enemy, to be informed as fully as possible of the conditions which allowed British Democracy to adapt itself victoriously to the circumstances of total war without abandoning the control of Government activity by public opinion.

(2) *Periodicals*. I was a member of a Commission created by the Fondation Universitaire at Brussels some fifteen years ago which proposed to constitute, for the country as a whole, at least one complete set of all the important scientific periodicals of the world. Our aim was almost accomplished at the outbreak of the war, but many of these unique sets having been deposited in the library of Louvain University, and the war having caused fresh hiatuses since three years ago, the whole work will have to be begun again.

[1] See pages 27 and 66.

To remedy this as far as possible, the Ministry of Education is acquiring five sets of the principal English periodicals of every kind published since the invasion of Belgium, that is, since May, 1940, and will continue to do so until normal relations with Belgium are restored.

We have drawn up a list of something over 200 periodicals, covering every subject, and we hope to reach a total of about 250; this corresponds to an expenditure of about £5,000 over a period of four years and for five libraries. We had naturally to make a selection of these publications without regard to the collections already existing in Belgium as we had no exact list of these. We argued that it would be better for our country to acquire all the important British publications even if it did not possess them previously. We propose also, wherever possible, to replace German by English periodicals.

For some months past a similar work is being carried out in the United States by the Belgian Embassy in Washington, who likewise have received important credits from the Belgian Government, amounting at the moment to some 15,000 dollars.

I must point out that it is difficult to acquire complete sets of books and periodicals published, not only in Great Britain but also in America, and that we shall have to rely largely on photo-copies.

In conclusion, it is evident that this work will have a very beneficial influence on the intellectual future of Belgium, since it will serve to strengthen in a permanent fashion the intellectual links between Great Britain and our country.

The Collection of Books for the Restoration of Bombed Libraries

By R. WRIGHT

Chairman of the Committee for the Recovery of Books and Manuscripts

Mr. Besterman has mentioned the effort made by the Library Association to save books from salvage. This is a play on words, but is in effect what has been achieved. It is as well to recall how, about two years ago, the demand for waste paper to convert into munitions of war was at its height. The normal channels of salvage had been found inadequate, and the attention of those in authority was drawn to the potentialities of the book-shelves in the homes as a source of supply. True, in paper salvage drives there had been local attempts to secure books—everyone will recall " the mile of books " plan, and the " three books for one " plan—but there had been no systematic effort to empty the nation's book-shelves.

No one was unsympathetic with the objects of the plan; the nation required the raw material and it had to be supplied. Yet the Library Association thought it necessary to approach the Ministry of Supply, and suggest the introduction of safeguards to prevent any book that had value as a book from being converted into war material. Such books were war material; they promoted the moral necessary to the waging of war, and were a potential source of power for the future needs of peace. The war-time scarcity of books was mentioned, as was the demand by our troops for books to enable them to overcome those periods of boredom that service men experience. It is unnecessary to stress these points to such a body as are represented here to-day, but I do recall the emphasis that had to be used to counter the acute national demand for paper. Sufficient to say that the final solution was due to an assurance that the introduction of such safeguards would not only achieve the objective we had in mind, but would result in a greater quantity of salvage.

That such an assurance was given, was based on our belief in the publicity value of such an appeal, and to our experience of the curious sense of book values possessed by individuals. When asked for an estimate of the proportion of books handed in that we should probably claim by our safeguards, we unhesitatingly suggested that 5 per cent might be of value for the restoration of bombed libraries, and 15 per cent would be suitable for the troops. But we also suggested that an appeal to the public to practise self denial in the interests of the fighting men and bombed libraries, would add to the weight of war material without detriment to the nation's book power.

We were able to satisfy the Ministry, but this was only achieved by the happy co-operation of the Publishers' and Booksellers' Associations, and incidentally by a visit the Prime Minister made to the Forces in the Middle East: he found that they wanted books, and being a book-man he recognised their need.

After twelve months' work we find confirmation of all our anticipations. The public response to the book drives has been most gratifying. Targets set at two books per head of population have been achieved with regularity; the troops have enjoyed 15 per cent of the enormous totals of books collected, but the gleaning for bombed libraries was only just over 2 per cent of the total. When we learn that, to date, some fifty million books have been secured from the book drives, this small percentage becomes a vast total; approximately one million books of potential value for the restoration of libraries have been collected.

You will notice that I am somewhat reserved; I speak of potential value. Scrutiny has been the work of many hands, both amateur and professional. True the librarians up and down the country have laboured most unselfishly at this self-imposed task—one city librarian claimed personally to have examined one million books, while ten members of my own staff were engaged full time for a fortnight—but generally the task was too large to be carried out entirely by trained librarians and other help had to be secured. Now these helpers being volunteers, were recruited from among people having an interest in books; in many cases book-lovers. Their work was of high standard, but if they erred it was in the right direction of being too inclusive. The setting aside of books to convert into shell cases was a painful experience for them; and my saddest memory was the acceptance of an invitation from one such body of helpers to review in their presence the books they had set aside for libraries. We may, however, be assured that the main objective of the scrutiny has been achieved. Nothing worth while has been passed over, and if only 50 per cent of those set aside have real value, then a great task has been performed. We should pay tribute to this great body of book-lovers up and down the country who have exemplified their appreciation of books by such practical performance.

Among the books collected are many valuable and some unique items, but if in normal circumstances we should suggest that the books recovered were disappointing in quality, we have to remember that to a bombed library a commonplace becomes a prized possession. This was impressed upon us when the British Museum indicated some of their desiderata as the result of enemy action.

Having safeguarded the collection of the books for bombed libraries there arose the question of storage and distribution. With this in view the Library Association invited other interested organisations to join forces, and set up a Committee for the Recovery of Books and Manuscripts. This Committee have so far only held two meetings, but a definite policy is beginning to emerge.

In view of possible future air raids it was decided that books collected should be housed locally as far as possible, and so remove the dangers of central storage. Many public libraries have agreed to this, but in many instances accommodation was not available, and the Committee have been forced to

consider centralisation. This is now the subject of enquiry; no easy task when we remember that a million books require about thirty miles of shelving.

The alternative was to commence distribution at once, but this was not practical, not only because we are unaware of our liabilities, but also because the libraries have not the staffs available to catalogue the books collected, neither have the bombed libraries accommodation to house them. The Committee are, however, experimenting with a few lists of books submitted from rural areas who have no library building and are unable to store the books. These lists are submitted in turn to the British Museum, The National Central Library, and afterwards to the bombed British libraries according to their geographical location; for transport in war-time is no mean problem. This, however, is no more than an experiment forced upon us by circumstances, the major task of systematic accumulation and classification of material, and its distribution, is a task for the future.

From these remarks it will be appreciated that the Committee is alive to their responsibilities, and doing their best to counter almost insurmountable war-time difficulties. One thing is, however, clear that the librarians of the country, through the Library Association, have ensured that future book salvage will be safeguarded.

But the collection of books to restore the bombed libraries must not end there. It was my privilege to be the Chairman of the Middlesex County Book Drive Committee, and although we achieved our target of four million books, and the Committee were delighted by the output of books for the Forces, they expressed disappointment at the type of book collected for libraries. We discussed the matter at the final meeting of the Committee, and it was the considered opinion that the restoration of bombed libraries would receive greater consideration in more peaceful times. A war salvage drive is not exactly an occasion to encourage parting with treasured possessions; a peace-time appeal in the nature of a self-denial week is more likely to be productive. This was the view of a group of laymen, the majority of whom were public men and women, and I feel that we should secure encouragement from this sober confirmation of what might well be our enthusiastic aspirations.

One factor is ever present, and that is the books required are no longer available from the publishers, but are in private possession. To these individuals the appeal must be made, and the best approach will probably be made through the medium of contacts with their particular interests. Thus all organisations that have these contacts will have a part to play, even though the appeal might come from some central quarter. We visualise a sober approach to the general reading public made through our public libraries; our scholars and students through the learned societies and universities; and the specialists through their organisation. Books enter into all phases of life; all have benefited from books, and I believe will react to an appeal which suggests that the end of the war is the time when that benefit might be shared with others. Aslib's share in that task is obvious.

DISCUSSION

The Chair was taken by Professor R. S. Hutton. In the discussion the following took part: Mr. R. Seymour; Dr. S. Duggan and Mr. W. Connely (*guests*); Mrs. H. M. Meekings, Mr. B. Agard Evans, Professor J. Timmermans, Miss J. F. Macrae, Major C. W. Hume, Mr. L. M. Harrod, Mr. W. R. Le Fanu, Mr. F. C. Francis, Mr. F. G. Tritton, Mr. F. Hughes, Mr. E. Carter, and a representative of the Coventry Public Libraries.

Opening the discussion, Mr. Richard Seymour gave a brief outline of the work of the Books Commission set up under the Chairmanship of Professor Ernest Barker by the Conference of Ministers of Education of the Allied Governments, which was largely concerned with the restocking of national and university libraries in the occupied countries.[1] He took the view that when it came to setting up any international organisation it was wiser not to interfere with existing direct bi-lateralism.

Professor R. S. Hutton thought that an international library clearing house must be backed up by strong *national* clearing houses. The Cambridge University survey of university

[1] See page 66.

and departmental libraries revealed both duplications and gaps in holdings. [2]German experience after the last war dealt with some of these problems and had been frequently noted in the Aslib Reports, e.g. Notgemeinshaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft.[2]

Dr. Stephen Duggan said that through his work in connection with American universities he had been closely associated with Mr. Carl Milam, Executive Secretary of the American Library Association, because of the splendid work the A.L.A. was doing with Latin-American libraries. Up to 1938 the U.S. Government had never spent a dollar on cultural propaganda, which was all done by Rockefeller and private enterprise. When visiting Latin-America Dr. Duggan himself and others had found what dirty work the Germans had done in emphasizing the mechanistic nature of the United States' civilisation and exploitation of negroes and redskins. Now the State Department developed the exchange of students (that was his own side of the work); the sum of $50,000 was allocated to found an American Library in Mexico, and Dr. Leiderberg was spared to organize it. The A.L.A. undertook to select the books and to have them translated into Spanish. The services of a good librarian were secured for Lima and other centres. Librarians were being sent to the Latin-American countries from Columbia University Library School, and vice versa.

Professor Hutton, expressing the general interest in the founding of American Libraries which Dr. Duggan had described, said tribute should be paid to the excellent work Dr. Richard Heindel was doing at the American Library in London. Unfortunately, Dr. Heindel had not been able to attend this meeting, as he was temporarily back in the U.S.A., but it was satisfactory to recall that Aslib had welcomed him when he started the American Library in 1942.

Mr. Willard Connely said that the late Secretary of the Educational Institute of Scotland, Mr. Tom Henderson, had spent all his spare cash on books about the American Civil War, and had left money to found an Institute and a special library concerned with that subject.

Mr. B. Agard Evans drew attention to a potential source of current periodicals and books in the large number of Government Departments conducting research, etc., on a war-time basis. After the war many of these Departments would be disbanded or merged, and their periodicals and technical books might become available. The librarians themselves had no authority to give away books, but an approach to the proper authority through, say, H.M. Stationery Office, might result in the proper co-ordination for collecting this material.

Miss J. F. Macrae said that the International Labour Office had the largest library of Labour material, which was now housed in Montreal, but the I.L.O. skeleton staff at Geneva was trying to keep copies from enemy and enemy-occupied countries: these would provide possibilities for microfilm records.

A representative of Coventry Public Libraries described how examination of salvage had brought in some early books on Cycling. Their Library, which was destroyed, had been particularly concerned with the Cycle Industry; these salvage finds had helped to fill gaps.

Mr. W. R. Le Fanu said that from the standpoint of a medical librarian rehabilitation problems were closely connected with the co-ordination of medical libraries. In his address Mr. Crowther had referred to the Royal Society of Medicine, and to the anomaly of the greatest medical library being a private one. But London was peculiarly rich in medical libraries which, taken together, had collections and potential functions probably greater than those of, say, the Surgeon-General's Library at Washington. In America the great medical libraries were in several cities, here they were centralized in London.

Proper distribution of periodicals depended on co-ordination of those independent medical libraries. Just before the war, thanks to the Rockefeller Foundation, a survey of the medical libraries had been made and a large measure of co-operation planned. Now informal discussions were taking place which might, it was hoped, make it possible for the Royal Society of Medicine to come more closely into co-ordination with the open medical libraries.

A further point to consider now, Mr. Le Fanu suggested, was the right of libraries to dispose of irrelevant books for which they were only "trustees for life." Resolutions by library authorities to part with their irrelevant holdings to a rehabilitation-pool should be sought forthwith. Post-war control of subscription to German periodicals also needed consideration, to avoid repetition of the excessive prices demanded in the inter-war period. An inter-library system of licensing and allocation might be usefully arranged.

Mr. F. C. Francis made a plea for a more realistic approach. The importance of the personal element in the success of libraries, which had come out in the previous discussion, should not be overlooked. It was psychologically most dangerous to have too large a gap between theory and practical possibility.

Mr. F. G. Tritton believed that Mr. Besterman's plan for allocating copies would be difficult to arrange, but a register of micro-negatives of lacunae could be kept. He thought that the making of the original negatives should be left to individual enterprise, but their storage and the register should be centralized.

Mr. Francis Hughes suggested that if the meeting had failed to discuss Mr. Besterman's paper as fully as it deserved, this was not due to lack of bibliographical experience, but to the scheme proposed being too big for Aslib to handle on its present financial basis.

Mr. Edward Carter said everyone recognised that there was a problem regarding stocks of material, for collection was now proceeding, but distribution had not yet been tackled. *Laisser-faire* could do little: a few libraries would be able to purchase the scarce periodicals and then the inadequate stocks would be cleared. He agreed, however, that this was not a matter which Aslib could handle alone.

[2] Fourth and Fifth Conferences Reports, pp. 65 and 126 respectively, etc.

The Rehabilitation Problem and the Service and Technique of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux

By EDWARD J. CARTER

Aslib discusses the rehabilitation of European special library and information services not because we feel charged with an special missionary zeal—a thing which personally I mistrust, particularly when under the guise of "culture," but simply—I suggest—because we know that any complete information service is inevitably international. We must begin our discussion with an international view of our task rather than extend our view later to consideration of the international aspects in, as it were, an appendix to discussion of our domestic problem.

But this is in no sense strange if we realise, as I am sure most of us do, that a charactertistic of most of the special studies which we serve is that they are international. This is fully appreciated in the realm of the sciences but it can and should be as true in the realm of the humanities and the arts, and in those big and comparatively new fields which lie between the sciences and humanities and overlap them ; the social services and territorial planning.

For science, as Bernal, along with many others, has emphasised, internationalism is one of the most specific characteristics. "Science has been from the start international in the sense that men of scientific temper, even in the most primitive times were willing to learn from others in different tribes or races." We who are information specialists have our own science, whether in the service of science in general or the humanities, and can share this characteristic. But we have a special challenge because the internationalism of learned studies and the fulfilment of active policies in a special sense is in our charge as the servants who must design and build and maintain the channels of communication without which there can be neither studies nor co-ordinated action.

The old sinister picture of the librarian as a kind of advanced bureaucrat with his bureau full of deep and unclassified pigeon-holes has gone for good from our gallery—though I could point to one or two dim examples in the attic of London's library services.

For many years before the war there had been signs of alarming retrogression—we saw for the first time the rise of a creed which could proclaim the existence of a purely German science but, elsewhere than in nazidom, largely because of the retrograde influence of fear of war, people began to turn towards national exclusiveness and the unity of the scientific world was threatened. It would seem paradoxical that in war-time when we are severely limited in our contacts, controlled by a maze of security provisions and isolated in a moral as well as material sense from a large part of the world, we can dare to suggest that we realise as never before how limitless is our compulsion to spread knowledge and how complex and fundamental are our responsibilities as information specialists. It is so, I believe, and this session of the conference is evidence of a germ of that feeling.

Early this year I had the privilege of going to the United States as a guest of the Rockefeller Foundation on a pleasantly but at times embarrassingly open brief. I went principally because our Microfilm service suggested useful subjects for discussion with our American colleagues at the nerve centre of microfilm work, but also because the Foundation seemed to be of the opinion that Aslib's potential contribution to the rehabilitation problem deserved the stimulus of closer contact with American opinion on these matters and a view of their vast activities.

This is the first chance I have had of saying publicly how grateful Aslib is for this recognition and for the prospects which I am sure it has opened up, not only of increasingly fruitful discussion, but of certain material and practical advances in our technique and work.

Apart from the superb stimulus of association with the fine imagination and intellect gathered in that cosmopolitan university, the Rockefeller office, particularly with Dr. David Stevens and Mr. John Marshall, Director and Associate Director of the Humanities division, under whom I worked, I was able to talk at length with many men and women at the head of national library and special library and cultural affairs, and had continuous and detailed talks with the men who control the destinies of microfilm in the United States. They watch the growth of our Microfilm Service with encouraging admiration, no less encouraging or admiring because their interest is sharp-witted and critical and they can back it with a parental solicitude.

What I have to say is largely derived from this recent experience and may have particular reference to the chances of Anglo-American co-operation. We have our own special opportunities, as a result of partnership in the war and the use of a common language, to make our contacts real and lively, but the means we adopt to do so are by no means exclusive in their reference to Britain and America. Particularly I want to stress the urgent need, which exists now and which will exist even more urgently after the war, for intimate, swift and efficient communication between ourselves and the U.S.S.R. A big measure of constructive goodwill exists which still has to be translated into the only terms that make it seriously our concern as information specialists. It is largely up to us to present a positive active policy and technique of communication. The U.S.S.R. has a vast amount to teach us, particularly perhaps in the broadest aspects of the development of intelligence services, and I am certain that we have many technical developments which will be of great interest to them.

Our immediate object is to discuss some of the technical details which arise in the organisation of international services, particularly, I wish to emphasise, so that they may be imaginatively and precisely adjusted to the needs of special studies and activity.

As librarians we deal fundamentally with published material, books, pamphlets and periodicals, but increasingly we realise that we are bound to deal with a mass of unpublished material, research papers and so on, much of which is never intended for publication in the traditional way but which, by subjection to the operations of an information service, is in a secondary sense " published " to a discriminate and limited audience.

We must pay particular attention to this increasing association of the information service process with the publication process. Traditionally, the author wrote and the book or periodical publisher published as the only means of distribution. The products of this publication were then collected by librarians for use in the libraries. From this we moved forward by the organization of lending libraries through which was effected a new publication or distribution. Now we move a step on. Increasingly libraries and information bureaux, working in association with research bureaux, such as exist, for instance, in library of Congress, are assuming an original production function and using, largely by means of microfilm, a wider range of publication techniques than were normally available in the past.

The very operation of placing information, whatever the form, as a document in the hand of an information service is in the new sense an act of publication or an act of making available. The information service process is one of discrimination ; by the process of classification and the other processes of library technique we make a limited range of material—ideally exactly what our enquirer wants—more available than hitherto to a limited and specialist public. The later day improvements in classification and bibliographical technique imply an advance in the process of discrimination, selection and organisation. They are largely scientific and largely impersonal in organisation but highly selective and discriminate in use.

The big organisational elements : union listing and classification, are the broad background services on which the discriminate and personal services can operate. They are thus of particular importance now. In Britain and

Europe we must vastly extend our Union cataloguing as a preliminary to the re-organisation of our library services. It is necessary to improve our union catalogue work not, as one critic has suggested, to lead to a perpetuation of disorder, but as a way of learning exactly what disorder there is in order to remedy it.

The difficulty of carrying out any programme of re-distribution of library resources will only be increased by the revelations of a union list if we approach the task in the spirit of an estate agent's inventory man and the same private property sense prevails in the tools of knowledge as it does in household nick-nacks. There is a lot to be said, however, in favour of keeping any union lists compiled now as purely office instruments and not embarking on full publication until the broad reorganisation policy has been settled.

In this question of rehabilitation there must be a word of warning. It is very easy, in view of the vast and as yet inestimable problems that face us in occupied and enemy Europe, to neglect the problem at home or to think that here we have merely a problem of filling gaps and re-creating the libraries and sections of libraries which have been destroyed. If that is all we do we shall have missed our chance of effecting root and branch reforms and developments that are as urgently necessary in Britain as elsewhere and as necessary within the sphere of special libraries and information bureaux as Mr. Lionel McColvin has shown them to be in the vast field of public library service.

As special librarians our technique must be adjusted to the needs of special workers and consequently I start my pattern from the unit defined by specialised use.

At present there is a minimum of organised academic life in Britain, there is probably little more in America though the structure exists in the committees and councils of the American Council of Learned Societies dealing mainly with Humanities, the National Research Council, for the Sciences, the Council for Education and the Social Science Council. All four councils are linked together under the leadership of Dr. Waldo Leland, Director of A.C.L.S. in the Committee of Research Councils.

As an aside I can't help referring to the enormous potential cultural value of a grouping such as this which brings the leaders of principal academic spheres of American life together round a table to discuss their common problems. How often, I wonder, do the principals of the Humanities and Sciences, the Social Sciences and other studies in Britain share their problems or even get so far as to realise that they have problems to share—one of the chief of which is our own business of information service.

The only completely integrated academic set-up is characteristically in the U.S.S.R. where the pervasive direction of the Academies of Arts, Sciences and Letters are brilliant and initiating elements in Soviet cultural life and where the sectional interests of all departments of studies and activity are linked within the national plan.

I foresee a development in this direction, not as a vaguely desirable background to a properly organised information service, but as an essential foundation if national and internal as well as more broadly international communications are to work efficiently.

Because I feel these broad considerations are important and, indeed, fundamental, I must trespass a bit beyond my limited field of the study of post-war technique to sketch what I consider to be the essential background which any technique we adopt will need if it is to operate efficiently.

In each country the primary division will be into National Academies—call them what you will—in which the user interests of the scientists, historians, the arts, education, have their centres. These will be more than professional societies, as we have them in Britain now, but will be the central organisational and initiatory departments of the whole of each sphere of national life. The essential feature is that they are the Academies of the actual working scientists, etc.

Each Academy would have direct communication with its associated academies in other countries.

Each Academy would have its *Documentation Section* which would carry the responsibility for seeing that all the elements of an efficient documentation service are fulfilled for its members in all the three main divisions of library and information service—namely Collection, Processing and Distribution.

The documentation services of all the Academies would be linked under the general direction of the National Central Library, as we call it in Britain, and with such documentation and information services as are fulfilled by Aslib, the British Society of International Bibliography, and an Abstracts Institute co-ordinated or absorbed into the National service.

Many of the tasks of the documentation services of the separate Academies would be common to all and fulfilled on behalf of all by the National Central Library and Documentation service.

The next organised unit up the scale would be international or, as I conceive them in more precise geographical terms, Continental Councils of the various National Academies. These would, in effect, correspond to the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, composed of separate departments for each of the specialist academies but with a single documentation centre.

The continental councils would be grouped so as to produce as large units as could be made functionally efficient. In America already, the unity that exists in library service over the United States and Canada has provided a continental nucleus, and this has been extended in discussion to include the whole of the two Americas. The important meeting of the American Conference of National Committees on Intellectual Co-operation, held in Havana in 1941, went far towards achieving agreement on the establishment of a pan-American council and paid detailed attention to the whole problem of library and documentation services. The report, prepared by Miss Edith Ware for the United States National Committee of this Conference, is well worth study.*

As far as co-operation within the limited sphere of the United States, and possibly Canada also, is concerned, Mr. H. A. Kellar, Director of the McCormick Library, Chicago, has prepared a report for the Experimental Division of Library of Congress on library co-operation which is of first-class importance.†

Mr. Kellar deals in outline with all the problems that face special library services in the achievement of real national co-ordination and he goes far in his discussion of many details.

The Continental Councils which I visualise would be the central agencies for the collection of material and might within reasonable limitations set themselves the objective of completeness within their areas.

Real completeness I regard as a crazy and utopian ideal, but that is not to say that every endeavour should not be made to get as near to it as possible. American librarians are discussing this intensively and have, indeed, set themselves the objective. But to show the scale of the problem, even in the United States, where it is probable the existing position is better than elsewhere, I can quote a few figures which Mr. Kellar, in his report, quotes from Donald P. Bean's *American Scholarly Publishing*.‡

Mr. Kellar notes that there are some 12,000,000 research titles in the world "quite apart from the tons of federal documentation and near-print outpourings." Of these America (including Canada, I believe), possesses only 30 per cent.

*Edith Ware.—Report of the National Committee of the U.S.A. on International Intellectual cooperation. N. York, 1942.

†Herbert A. Kellar. Memorandum on library cooperation. No. 1. Library of Congress, 1941.

‡Donald P. Bean. American Scholarly Publishing, Chicago. 1929. p. 5.
H. A. Kellar. op. cit. pp. 1 and 18.

The total number of book titles in the world is estimated at 30,000,000, of which the United States is estimated to possess 12,000,000. About 2,500,000 of these are unaccounted for "in a national sense", by which is meant unrecorded in the Library of Congress Union Catalogue, in regional or other Union catalogues, or in the American Imprints Inventory. Library of Congress alone estimates that it holds 1,500,000 books and pamphlets which are not fully processed and not represented in the Main Catalogue.

There can be no doubt that the position in other countries is even more deplorable.

I have drawn this pattern of National Academies and Continental Councils because I think that no scheme for the improvement of the details of communication through the agency of special libraries and information bureaux can possibly be successful unless there is a unified scheme such as this in the background.

I have not emphasised, as I might have done, that the pattern is not designed to improve information services ; that is a secondary or incidental objective. I am confident that it would make such improvements possible, but the reason for the planning of cultural institutions is to broaden, heighten and deepen culture ; to make the world a place where reason can prevail and the influence of its scientists and humanists be exerted efficiently. Such organisation of cultural life has been achieved in the Soviet Union and has proved as effective in the arts of peace as in those of war, but can never be fully effective throughout the world unless it is fully recognised as a task worth achieving in all countries great and small.

Our technique is exercised in the three operations of collecting, processing and distributing information. As librarians we deal with books, pamphlets and periodicals, as information officers we have no such limits and must assume responsibility for Mr. Kellar's tons of federal documentation and near-print outpourings, and must go further into the whole unlimited ranges of everything that is a source of information. We must not forget in the midst of the technologies that the whole method we use depends on the type of the user and his needs, which dictate ours, and on the type of material.

In his 1942 Report on the Library of Congress, Mr. MacLeish emphasises the effects of new demands on a traditionally constituted library service.

> " The immeasurable balance is *quality* of demand. Service to a scholar who knows his author's name and merely needs to locate his title is one thing. Service to a researcher who begins, not with an author, or a title, or even with a subject, but with an urgent and pressing problem of government or of raw materials, or, say, the administration of man-power is another. . . . The difficulty now is that the reader, particularly in a great reference library serving the machinery of a modern state, is not infrequently a man working under great pressure of time and responsibility, who does not know, and cannot be expected to know, what book written by what man may give him what he needs, or what subdivision of what subject may have been assigned to it by a cataloguer. . . . Such a reader can be adequately served only by some machinery as the lawyer now possesses . . . —or failing that, by the human intervention of trained reference librarians working from selective bibliographies and producing at the end of their work, not an assembly of random references, but the materials actually relevant to the solution of the problem. It is not inconceivable that narrower and more sensitive and more precise controls may in time be developed by a refinement of the classification system, or by some comparable means. . . . "

These are precisely the tasks which all of us who are information officers and research librarians have been trying to fulfil in the stress of war—to refine our techniques to the temper of these urgent times, and I am sure we have learnt a lot.

Certainly for Aslib we have had experiences of the origination of our microfilm service as a refinement of distribution technique out of the location work

and processing undertaken in the Aslib office, and a further extension of that is now under consideration in connection with the Union Catalogue of Periodicals.

In these present proposals I am not suggesting any Utopian " world encyclopaedia " but something essentially more simple because based on the co-ordination and extension of existing services rather than the creation of new.

The most important extension is the organisation on first a national and then on an international scale of the collection, processing and distribution of knowledge—knowledge that, in its simplest form could be represented by a single line of typescript, duly classified and filed—Mr. Smith of London University is studying . . . what you will—the use of plastics in building structure ; the economics of prefabrication ; the economics of housing in relation to a declining birth rate. I have taken simple examples from my own field merely because I know that even such elementary and fundamental knowledge of what is being done, and who is doing it, is at present unknown to the research workers in Britain charged with the solution of the related social problems. I am not frightened by certainty that one of the first extensions of this will be a demand that secret industrial research should be brought more into the open.

I allow the possibility, as things are now, that there will have to be grades of secrecy for reasons of national security, but this could be adequately provided for by the fact that the basic documentation unit is a national one.

The documentation unit, still fulfilling its functions as collector, would organise the distribution or redistribution of literature within each academic field and through the continental and inter-continental units would assure the receipt of adequate supplies of all foreign publications.

On the question of processing, the documentation unit would possibly fulfil the task of classification on behalf of all constituent units, or if at the start, as is inevitable, the constituent units were tied, in their own institutions and libraries, to a great variety of systems, the central unit would internationalise the classifications to an approved international standard by means of conversion tables It would also assume the vitally important task of extension and revision of classification systems to meet changing needs.*

Since the documentation would be done by experts closely associated with the actual work in the laboratories or in the studies of each specialist group, one of the old complaints would be met that classification is unrelated to the actual intellectual processes of the research worker.

The production and distribution of catalogue cards could also be part of the documentation centre's work and so could the publication and distribution of bibliographies,† though I see less need will arise for published bibliographies in the present sense once such documentation centres exist, and the specific bibliographical information, hot and up-to-date, can be obtained direct from the files and be distributed by film, microprint or telephone.

Abstracting could be centralised, but in view of the later discussion in this conference I will not enlarge on that.

The positive outward-looking function is in respect of distribution. Here we are on difficult ground, not because we lack means, but because the new techniques of distribution are so revolutionary and raise troublesome questions of copyright and so on. The question of distribution is, of course, only the completion of the library process and is fundamentally linked to the preceding processes of collection and processing.

In the most elementary sense collection and distribution are one and the same operation viewed from opposite ends ; one man distributes knowledge in the form of books or information only to add to the other man's collection. This could be more fully realised and made part of our technique by the provision of guarantees that whatever is received by any user of an information service is, in fact, incorporated into the organised information files at the

*Kellar op. cit., p. 24. †Kellar op. cit., p. 26.

receiver end: each individual becoming, as it were, a generative element in the information service and providing the living links between varying departments of studies. My pattern of Academies with their documentation sections would go some way to meet this.

Research worker A, who is a sociologist studying housing problems, gets economic information from, say, the London School of Economics; he also gets information from the Building Research Station on some technical matter intimately reflecting on his own sociological problem—say, information on the sound-proofing of dwellings. The information service should provide him with easily found and easily used channels to convey the building technology information in its original form to the L.S.E. and to refer back enough of a reference to the B.R.S. of his sociological research to provide the link between the two departments of study. I think that many information officers will echo my experience that this build up, of enormous potential value, is seldom achieved.

Also, on the question of the link between collection and distribution, and possibly the most urgent problem of all that we must face, is the collection and distribution of information about work in progress. I have referred to this already and have emphasised that it is the kind of problem that can only be really solved by the re-organisation of academic and operative life on terms that make the existence of such an intelligence service possible.

We probably all have examples in our minds in connection with war work in which one information centre may be approached by four or five—my record was, I think, ten—different individuals or institutions all looking for the same item of information. Or we know of the antithesis of that experience in which some leading scientist is asked to undertake as a matter of great urgency work which he has already done for another department.

We have not yet achieved this integration in response even to the drastically urgent needs of war and it is, on that measure, difficult to see how we can achieve it in peace, but I reckon that the pressure can be great enough from peace-time problems to drive us and the workers whom we serve to find a solution.

At the forefront of our consideration, particularly in discussion of the rehabilitation problem, is the question of documentary reproduction. In the last decade, as Mr. Kellar says, we have seen introduced a revolutionary range of new techniques—inexpensive methods of publishing and reproducing research materials.

Microfilm has received most attention and remains the most important. I need not go into the details of microfilm service here, the matter was discussed by Mrs. Moholy and Mr. Lancaster Jones in this place a year ago. Nothing that has happened in England since then has modified our sense of the importance of the Aslib microfilm endeavour or relieved our awareness of the terrifying range of unsolved problems in connection with the development of film; problems of copyright, commercial exploitation, supply of equipment, etc.

There can be no doubt that microfilm will be one of the chief means of solving our problem of post-war distribution. Through it we shall be able to make-good gaps in collections and in runs of periodicals which could be led by no other means.

In America there is considerable discussion of the potential uses of microprint instead of microfilm. This method, which prints a black-on-white microscopic image of a large number of pages on to a single sheet for projection on to a screen is being used for the reproduction of British Sessional Papers of the nineteenth century. Dr. Boni, whose Readex reader is the only reader at present available for microprint, is in charge of the work.

Another development of fantastic possibilities, about which I cannot say much now, is an abstract microfilm selector which, by the combination of a normal tabulation system and microfilm, can select automatically in accordance

with the tabulation setting whatever abstracts are wanted at the rate of 1,000 a second.

Recently we have had yet another system—an old one brought prominently forward in solution of a war problem. The American Alien Property Custodian has initiated on a large scale the production by photo offset of a number of German scientific works in short supply, so that American and British scientists can now obtain complete copies of, for instance, Beilstein's Handbook at a tithe of the cost of the original. Other publications are also being reproduced by this method and made available to limited circles. This technique makes possible the replacement of missing journals or books in a form almost indistinguishable from the originals; it also treads rather heavily on a good many copyright toes.

It would be unsuitable if I started the documentary reproduction hare now and having shown his nose I must call him back to his form with, however, the suggestion that among our most realistic and most urgent tasks is the establishment of a really representative expert committee on Documentary Reproduction, to study all the post-war problems and all the post-war contributions which all the available methods have to make. Aslib has already an initiating place in this work and if we get time and money firmly intend to go ahead. The problem is not, of course, limited by the range of tasks concerned with rehabilitation, and anyhow includes a large number of as yet unsolved and basic problems of film technique.

I can add that Dr. Vernon Tate, Dr. Schwegmann, Mr. Watson Davis, Dr. Fussler, in Chicago, and the other leading microfilm figures in Washington, our good friend Eugene Power, of Ann Arbour, and all American microfilm experts want to see such a committee in existence here to effect really creative liaison with them.

In conclusion I can refer to two big problems which are fundamental to the operation of an efficient information service on the scale I have visualised. They are both problems which must be faced. The first is the education of the personnel needed for the services we have in mind. This is, of course, under constant discussion, but we have not yet penetrated the outer crust of the problem. Particularly in our field of special librarianship we have to bear in mind the fact that we serve special studies and operations and the whole of our service must be adjusted to their needs.

The second problem is the education of our own special public. Have special librarians any programme for making the scientists and historians, and all the rest of the men who use us really know what we can give them if we are given the chance? Too many learned men in all fields of study and action gaze at the intricate machine of library and information service with a sort of dumb astonishment. Neither we nor they realise sufficiently that the information service which does not derive its life from its users, either as contributors at the collecting end or as recipients at the distribution end, but is merely a bureaucratic processing machine, is only an image of what an information service can be as a positive and creative element in the service of the people.

DISCUSSION

The Chair was taken by Miss M. Gosset, of the Science Library. The following took part in the discussion: Mr. J. E. Wright, Mr. S. K. Jones, Mr. T. Besterman, Mr. L. C. Wharton, Mr. E. A. Baker, Miss A. M. Mostel, Mr. B. Agard Evans, Mr. F. C. Francis, Mrs. M. Wood Ure, Mr. R. L. Sheppard, Mr. A. E. Cummins, Dr. V. E. Parke, and Mrs. L. Moholy.

Mr. J. E. Wright said that one noteworthy point seemed to have been overlooked: that Aslib comprised, after all, only a small minority, whereas there were many who did not realise the existence of the problem of Library Rehabilitation. Therefore Aslib should write up the subject in the technical press and elsewhere.

Mr. S. K. Jones urged that the Treasury should be asked to increase its grant to the National Central Library, which already acted as an international clearing house.

Mr. E. A. Baker said that the National Central Library had not been overlooked, but could not now do this work because it had no shelving space whatever to spare; to a certain extent it could still circulate lists, but could not house any stocks except its own.

Mr. L. C. Wharton pointed out that so far as international relations were concerned, the International Federation of Documentation had much relevant material, going back to 1910; and a great deal had been done in this field on the Continent.

Regarding Mr. Carter's suggestion of an index of work in hand in the Universities, Miss A. M. Mostel suggested that though it might be possible to get University research recorded centrally, private enterprise would not be willing to divulge particulars of current research.

Mr. F. C. Francis drew attention to the part played by the American periodical *Work in Progress*, in disseminating knowledge of current research work in the humanities. Similar services were performed by the Institute of Historical Research and the Bibliographical Society.

Mr. R. L. Sheppard quoted Sir William Ramsay and Sir James Ewing, who, faced with a similar demand, had said it appeared that the only thing would be for the Royal Society to keep a book of what the societies expected to discover!

Mr. A. E. Cummins suggested that the special librarians themselves were best qualified to know which libraries most needed the books available; therefore, the allocation might well be left to them.

Dr. V. E. Parke said that the British Chemical industry would not be willing to publish as much as its counterpart in the U.S.A., where the firms were, indeed, quite anxious to publicise their research. He asked what the Aslib Microfilm Service could do in the way of increasing its own service. Mrs. Lucia Moholy stated that a cumulative index of microfilm was being compiled in the U.S.A.

Mr. Edward Carter stated that the R.I.B.A. was already working on the lines indicated and was setting up a Joint Committee of Architectural Education.

The British Museum as a Special Library

By F. C. FRANCIS

There is a need to consider the somewhat anomalous relations of the great national libraries and the many special libraries, both public and private, which have been and are being built up and developed in all countries. This is a problem which is, I consider, of vital interest to-day, and which, indeed, will call for some solutions in the not very distant future. I propose in this paper to examine some aspects of it and in the course of it I hope I shall be able to give some rough indications of how the Museum Library may be of use to special librarians—in this way fulfilling what, I have no doubt, many will have expected to be the real purpose of my paper.

The British Museum is not a special library in the Aslib sense of the word. I would not even claim that it is a collection of special libraries (again using the word in the Aslib sense). By this I do not mean that it has not material and resources at its disposal outrivalling those of many, if not most, special libraries, but that the material has not been "worked over"—examined, analysed, co-ordinated—to serve a multitude of special purposes, in the way the efficient special librarian deals with the books and periodicals under his care. On the other hand, I would suggest to you, quite seriously, that it is only by approaching as nearly as possible to being a collection of special libraries that a great national library can fulfil its destiny and maintain its place and prestige in the world of knowledge. Mr. Archibald Macleish, the Librarian of Congress, who has shown a sturdy desire to face up to the problems which beset the development of great libraries, recently expressed a similar view. "To judge whether the work of a great library is well done," he said, "it is necessary to know whether the entire collection is consistently approaching the wholeness and the harmony it can never achieve but must always labour to attain—whether the entire collection is nearer to the impossible but nevertheless imperative ideal of organic responsiveness to its readers' need." No librarian worth his salt can be satisfied with cataloguing and classifying his stocks; he must be always on the look-out for means to make his books known, to make them play their full part in the growth of knowledge. And this is just as true of the great national libraries, however difficult it may be for them to exploit fully all the vast stores of knowledge hidden on their shelves.

I can perhaps best indicate the problems to which I have referred by examining briefly some of the resources possessed by the British Museum Library. It is a not uncommon experience in the Museum (or, indeed, in any large library of the same kind) when examining a catalogue of a special library or special collection

to find that the Museum not only has the bulk of the books included in the special catalogue, but, as often as not, many others besides. This fact, obvious though it is on reflection, may not be as familiar as it ought to be to some special librarians and may prove of use to them at some time or other.

As you know, the British Museum is a " copyright " library. This means, or should mean, that as far as is humanly possible every book, periodical, pamphlet and leaflet which is printed or published *in this country* should be found in it. This is an ideal and like all ideals not capable of complete attainment. There are besides one or two categories of books, such as those which are not on sale to the public and are not for this reason subject to the law of copyright deposit, and those which are printed by obscure printers and fail to be noted in the publishers' lists and so escape the watchful eyes of the officials of the Copyright Office, which may fail to find their way into the Museum. But for all practical purposes the collection of modern English books (this would include very many American books) as they are published is within a few per cent of being complete. This is fact number one which no special librarian should be unaware of, for it means that not only the standard works which, after all, are available in many places, but the vast numbers of secondary or minor works, which are far from being so common, come by this means into the Museum collection. The British Museum has enjoyed this copyright privilege since its foundation. It is no secret, however, that up to the middle of the nineteenth century the successive copyright acts were loosely drafted and even more loosely observed, so that it is useless to expect to find anything approaching a similar degree of completeness before, say, 1880, and, indeed, the percentage of incompleteness rises more and more steeply the farther back one goes from the present time. But if the provisions of the copyright act were imperfectly drafted and rarely enforced, our predecessors in the Museum made great amends by the wisdom and energy of their efforts to increase the resources of the library by purchase and by attracting gifts. One of the main principles of the Museum's buying policy has been and still is to acquire by purchase English books and periodicals which for some reason or other have never come into the collection.

The original library included—indeed it was founded on—Sir Hans Sloane's collection of some 40,000 volumes rich in works on natural history and medicine. Its later accessions included such collections as the very fine natural history library of Sir Joseph Banks and the law library of Francis Hargrave. I mention these collections in particular because they show that the Museum's older books are not by any means exclusively literary or non-scientific. In fact, it would be true to say that the Museum's purchases over a long period were made on a very wide and inclusive scale in a conscious effort to maintain its catholicity. Panizzi, to whom more than to any other person the Museum owes the great prestige it has enjoyed, laid down the principle, it is said, that the Museum should possess the best library of each language outside the native country of that language. In more recent times, various considerations have led to the abandonment of the effort to make the library all-inclusive and to the adoption of a more limited buying policy. The first of these considerations, of course, is the vast extent of the published literature in every country in the world on all kinds of specialised subjects which only a specialist can truly understand. This fact, coupled with a strictly limited grant of money for spending purposes, has been, I imagine, the strongest reason for limiting the scope of the Museum's purchases. The second reason is the existence in London of libraries which are " national " in the same sense as the British Museum is a " national library," which have specialised in just those classes of books which the Museum has found it most difficult to specialise in, I mean books in the mechanical sciences, which are the special concern of the Science Library, and natural history books, which are the concern of the Natural History Museum. Medical books form another category which the Museum has found it difficult to deal with, but here we

have not the comfort of thinking that the task of keeping them can be left to another national library, though there are several medical libraries in London which can provide an approximation to such a library. Thus it has come about that, broadly speaking, the Museum has itself tended to specialise on subjects which might be roughly grouped as humanistic. Now when I say that the Museum does not attempt to compete in these various subjects which I have indicated, it should not be inferred that no such books are received by the Library. It is the practice of the Museum to attempt to add to its collections "English" books printed abroad, and also to buy books by outstanding writers and really important books likely to be of historical importance in every field of knowledge. And it is, of course, the fact that many, most important, scientific works are published in the general proceedings of learned societies and academies, or in series, or as dissertations. These will, almost certainly, be found in the Museum Library in complete ranges, as will the publications of foreign governments, which again include works in all branches of study. Gifts of books also of all kinds naturally find their way to the national library. All these taken in conjunction with the Museum's virtual completeness in modern English (including many American) books make the Museum collections considerable, even in those subjects in which it does not pretend to vie with the special libraries.

Thus it has come about that, while in every field of knowledge the Museum has very respectable collections of books to offer the seeker after knowledge, in certain subjects the collections are imperfect and unbalanced. Take, for example, the medical sciences. I have mentioned the foundation collections which were strong in medical books which to-day have a great historical value. By copyright the Museum has in the past acquired most, if not all, medical books and periodicals published in this country, including such valuable documents as the reports of the local medical officers of health. From the same source it receives to-day a copy of all medical books and periodicals published in this country and many from America. By purchase it has supplemented its early collections of valuable historical works in the medical sciences. In the nineteenth century it acquired the remarkable sets of French medical theses from Paris, Strasburg and Montpellier, which would be hard to match in this country. By gift, included in the valuable collections of books and pamphlets illustrating English social history, presented to the Museum by Sir Edwin Chadwick, it has many books dealing with hygiene and sanitation, such as the series of reports on the sanitary conditions of towns all over England and Wales, made about the middle of the century to the General Board of Health. By international agreement the Museum has obtained and still obtains the official publications of many foreign governments, including many on medical and related questions. And finally there is the vast mass of publications of learned societies the world over, which contain valuable contributions to medical science. No one will dispute the very great value of these collections, but there is no use blinking the fact that, from the specialist's point of view, they are unsatisfactory, because it has not been possible to develop them scientifically and to use them as the basis of a really comprehensive medical library. Had it been possible to make separate lists of books in special subjects, some at any rate of the criticisms would have been silenced. But it must be remembered that there are dozens of such subjects, each of them requiring experts for their proper cataloguing.

Similar criticisms can be made of other sections of books in the National Library and in general it would not be untrue to say that the collections are strong on the historical side of most subjects and weakest in modern foreign technical literature in non-humanistic subjects. The value of the British Museum collections, however, even in these non-humanistic subjects can be illustrated by an examination of a few pages taken at random from the *World List of Scientific Periodicals*. Out of 112 items on pp. 226, 227, the British

Museum has seventeen, the Natural History Museum Library five, and the Science Library twenty-two. Of the seventeen in the British Museum no fewer than five are not to be found elsewhere, and it is scarcely too much to say that when the Museum and other libraries are listed as having runs of a particular periodical, the Museum is often alone in having the earlier volumes. The figures on pp. 510, 511 show a similar proportion: out of eighty-seven items ten are in the Museum (three being unique, on Gas Engineeering, Entomology and Pharmacy), five in the Natural History Museum, and sixteen in the Science Library; on pp. 756, 757, which contain the heading *Zeitschrift*, the Museum has twelve out of eighty-three (three being unique, on Insurance, Hypnotism and Psychology), while the Natural History Museum has five and the Science Library seven.

Now there is another aspect of a national copyright library's work which has a direct bearing on this problem. And that is its obligation to be the storehouse of all the accumulated stores of knowledge which have been and are being created all over the world. According to this conception the national library has a moral responsibility to make its own collections complete without regard to other collections, which do not, and indeed could not, share this responsibility. It is interesting to observe the effect of the creation and growth of the large special libraries on this aspect of the national library's functions. These help, not unnaturally, to encourage the tendency for the national library to limit the extent and scope of its purchases in those subjects which are covered by the special libraries and which in any case, because of their highly specialised nature, are difficult for the larger library to deal with. The lack of balance in the national library's collections to which I have already referred can be partly explained by this state of affairs. It is worthy of note that in Washington the Library of Congress is in a similar position with regard to the libraries of the Department of Agriculture, the Geological Survey, and the Surgeon-General's Department. There is a general undertaking on the part of the Congressional Library to abstain from unnecessary competition with these special libraries. The scope of such an agreement is, of course, very limited and it can do little to prevent overlapping and duplication. There is another difficulty which is inherent in our present library arrangements. Special libraries, under the direction of able and energetic librarians, have a tendency to expand and to widen the field of their interests so as to include books on related subjects, biographical matter, and such like. This not only, in some cases, leads to the duplication of material already existing in the national libraries, but sometimes to competition to acquire books which on an objective view should be in the national library. Again, being in close touch with particular subjects, special libraries are often made the recipients, by grateful readers, of large general donations, the greater part of which would find a more suitable home in the national library.

This is a state of affairs which has grown up naturally enough and, as I have mentioned, it is not peculiar to this country. It is certainly not my wish to seem to suggest that these various types of library should not exist side by side. What I should like to be sure of is that the position is fully understood and that efforts will be made to find a satisfactory *modus vivendi* by which each library, be it the national library or a special library, can take its place in a properly thought out scheme and fulfil the tasks allotted to it as economically as possible. The world to-day demands of a librarian, not only that he should collect books, but that he should organise his collecting so as to provide up-to-date, accurate and complete information on the subjects covered by his collections. We must see to it that this is done, but that we should not fall into the danger of having several libraries doing the same work.

There is one suggested solution to some of these difficulties which has been put forward in the past and which will undoubtedly be urged with even greater force when the time comes for us to set our libraries and educational

institutions in going order once more. According to this solution the stocks of our great learned libraries will be surveyed and redistributed among the various libraries " in the interest of research."* Thus the " scientific " books would go to the Science Museum, the natural history books to the Natural History Museum, and so on. This plea for the dispersal of special books in the interests of scientific efficiency has a speciousness about it which makes it necessary to consider it as fully and as openly as possible. The arguments in favour of it are obvious and do not, I think, need further elucidation. Those against are not so obvious, but if they are rightly appreciated will be seen to be very weighty and to bear directly on the question of the relations of the large public special libraries and the national ' copyright ' library. Suppose this principle of dispersion were to be accepted : the first question would be : which books are to go to which library ? Is, for example, the set of the Reports on Sanitation and Public Health, made to the General Board of Health just under 100 years ago, to which I have already referred, to go to the School of Hygiene, as they are concerned with questions of sanitation and drainage and the sanitary condition of the growing populations of the nineteenth century ? or are they to go to a medical library because they deal with the influence of sanitation on epidemic diseases such as cholera ? or are they to be sent to the London School of Economics because of their importance as contributions to the social history of England ? Does not the suggestion fail to take into account the many-sided interest of many books ? And is not this many-sidedness a strong argument in favour of the great general library which by careful cataloguing and indexing can make one book play many parts? This problem of classifying books is no easy one even within the bounds of a single library : it would be overwhelming if it had to allot a book to one library or another.

But the principle of dispersion would have wider applications still. Are the collections of the Science Library and the Natural History Museum, to take them as examples, so unified and compact that they could resist demands to disgorge some of their treasures among smaller special libraries more fitted to deal with certain groups of books than they could hope to be ? Indeed, this demand might with equal cogency be made from time to time as new special libraries developed. Such a practice could only end in complete chaos. Many books again might be adjudged to be of greater value in a general library than in a special library. The whole conception is, of course, preposterous. You will say perhaps that I am overstating the case. But this is not so. Reorganisation of our library services, undertaken on the scale suggested in this plan, cannot stop at one library. Is it not, in fact, obvious that until our large special libraries are organised in such a way that each is allotted some commonly agreed division of literature—one or more classes of some accepted system of classification—all arguments for the distribution of the contents of one or more libraries among certain others are merely special pleading ? These arguments take no account of the arrangements necessary for the registration and storage of copyright books and periodicals, which will always form the bulk of the holdings of the copyright library. Nor do they consider the facilities in the various special libraries for cataloguing and circulating catalogue entries which the national library has the staff and the facilities to do. All these considerations, in my view, point much rather to centralisation than to dispersion as an ideal towards which we must work. Such a gathering together of our great reference library services need not necessarily mean collection in one building, but under one control. It would go a long way towards solving also those problems of co-operative buying and centralised cataloguing, both of them, I consider, urgent practical questions, which will have to be considered by the great libraries concerned, not subjectively,

* Such is the suggestion propounded, for example, by Mr. C. C. Barnard, Librarian of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, in a letter to *The Times*, 12th July 1943. (*See Mr. Barnard's letter and Mr. Francis' further comment, page* 47.—Ed.).

as they have been so often considered in the past, but objectively and dispassionately, without regard to sectional interests. It follows, also, of course, that the national library should have at its disposal adequate resources to enable it to develop its own collections, especially those which are not covered by separate special libraries. By the adoption of an agreed system of classification and the expansion of the present Museum *Subject Index* to include other national libraries we should be able to go a long way towards realising the ideal of organising our library services " in the interests of research."

Our reference library services, like other respected British institutions, have grown up at haphazard, not as the result of carefully planned policies. They have developed, each in its own way, quite independently of one another. But I think, and I am sure that the majority of librarians will agree with me, that the time has gone by when we can look upon the various libraries as separate entities : all are engaged in the vital task of providing the basis of information on which the structure of new knowledge can be built, and they can do this best, I suggest, under some unified control.

DISCUSSION

The Chairman, Mr. Theodore Besterman, said that many people—including, it must be admitted, not a few special and even general librarians—had a somewhat inadequate notion of the extent and scope of the printed matter available in the British Museum Library. Mr. Francis had made a noble effort, on which he was to be congratulated, to correct that deficiency. What, in brief, was the chief difference between the British Museum and every other library ? Mr. Besterman thought the difference—for in this respect he believed the British Museum to be unique—might be expressed thus : a scholar or research worker with a long list of publications to consult or of references to verify could usually tick off a majority of his titles at the British Museum, but nowhere else. Of course, like all generalizations, this one must be qualified. It might not hold good if the scholar's field were a very narrow one endowed with a good special library. It would not much longer hold good of the British Museum alone if Archibald MacLeish's inspired leadership at the Library of Congress were given full rein—as the speaker ardently hoped it would be. In librarianship, at least, rivalry need not spell envy.

Mr. Francis was, of course, quite right in saying that the British Museum was not a series of special libraries ; but it was equally true that one massive effort could transform it into such a constellation of special collections. The material, generally speaking, was there : it only needed to be deliberately rearranged in accordance with the new ideals of librarianship—ideals which the British Museum had been largely instrumental in creating. During certain periods of the Museum's history—not, alas ! to-day—funds had been available for large-scale and systematic book-buying ; and the purchases so made, together with appropriate bequests, had made it possible to create quite a few special collections within the framework of the general library, e.g. the Banksian natural history, Imitatio Christi, Thomason civil war, Crawford philatelic and many others. The reclassification of the Museum's shelves in a more detailed way than the present system allowed would yield many more collections which, while they would need organised additions, would still be more complete than many of the corresponding special libraries.

Some special librarians might still be sceptical, and those chiefly interested in the scientific side might protest that all this had no bearing on their special requirements. Mr. Besterman suggested that an examination of the Aslib directory should remove any lingering doubts of this kind. There were few pages in that guide to special collections and the like on which the name of the British Museum did not appear. Under the first letter of the alphabet alone, the subjects on which collections of one kind or another were to be found in the British Museum were : Aberdare, advertising, aeronautics, agriculture, albums, almanacks, alphabets, aluminium, America, Amsterdam, anarchism, anatomy, anglo-saxon, Antwerp, appeal cases, art, assignats, astrology, Austria—and this list did not include any of those specialized assemblies of books inevitably created even by the widest system of classification.

Regarding the place of the national library in the general structure of the country's library resources, Mr. Francis had expressed himself strongly on the value of centralization, but certainly not too strongly. Indeed, Mr. Besterman had no doubt that there was a residual degree of centralization which would not merely continue to be necessary, but which would be increasingly needed. After the proposals he had made earlier in this conference there should be no need for him to repeat that he was a very warm—some might say a heated—advocate of all forms of library co-operation, even if such co-operation involved some incursion into a " what we have we hold " policy : but he was equally strongly convinced that any changes introduced must not be made at the expense of the national library. He had said " must not," but " cannot " would be nearer the mark. Many co-operative library projects would require a centre where the work could be done, and it would certainly be a pity to create new organizations for purposes which the British Museum was able and willing to

fulfil. The best solution would seem to be the endowment of the British Museum Library with greater powers and, above all, bigger funds, rather than the breaking up of its organization and collections.

In the discussion upon Mr. Francis' paper the following took part: Mr. R. L. Sheppard, Mr. S. K. Jones, Mr. L. C. Wharton, Mr. D. V. Arnold, Mr. E. A. Baker, Miss M. Couldrey, Mr. B. Agard Evans, Professor R. S. Hutton, Miss G. E. Lockie, and Dr. V. E. Parke.

Mr. R. L. Sheppard expressed regret that Mr. Francis had ascribed to Mr. Barnard proposals which he had not made[1]. Mr. Barnard had proposed a survey of the present holdings of periodicals in libraries and an interchange of stocks where possible to eliminate broken sets, in order to build up complete sets where they would be of most use. He had not suggested the dispersal of our great national reference collections, as Mr. Francis implied.

Mr. S. K. Jones agreed with the view that the collections held at the British Museum should not be broken up and distributed outside, but he hoped that the stocks would be distributed within the Museum in such a way that students would be afforded the same facilities as in a special library. It was worth recalling that Carlyle had started the London Library because he could not take Museum books home. Mr. Jones asked if the British Museum (National History) were an entirely separate organization.

Mr. Besterman observed that the daughter library at the British Museum (National History) might be followed by others. Mr. L. C. Wharton pointed out that only departmental libraries moved.

Mr. D. V. Arnold asked if it were Mr. Francis' idea that departmental libraries should become loan libraries, while the British Museum became a museum.

Mr. E. A. Baker drew attention to the fact that the British Museum had the *only* complete collection of British Government publications. A loan collection also was needed, and he suggested that one should be formed at the National Central Library. Another valuable instrument for research would be an expanded index of the British Museum and other libraries.

Miss M. Couldrey expressed the hope that the policy of duplicate sets would be followed. Where only one set existed which could be on loan, it was very bad for research. Miss Couldrey stressed the need for promptness in the B.M. service for supplying photostats; the Patent Office photostats took two or three weeks.

Professor R. S. Hutton said that vested interests were an obstacle, but rationalization was needed. Big companies acquired stocks of periodicals, but not all were permanently kept.

Dr. V. E. Parke said that the lending of books was most important, and it was difficult to combine this with the idea of the *keeping* of books.

In reply to points raised in the discussion, Mr. Francis explained that the British Museum Library had no administrative connexion with the Library of the British Museum (Natural History), and that all copyright books were received by the former. Mr. Francis repudiated the suggestion that he felt any complacency over the fact that the British Museum had copies of certain scientific and technical books and periodicals which were not in the scientific and technical libraries. The point had been made in order to stress the anomaly of the present arrangement and the need for a more co-ordinated policy.

Concerning Mr. Francis' statement in the footnote on page 45, *the following letter has been received from* Mr. C. C. Barnard, *the Librarian of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, W.C.*1*:* "Mr. Francis has completely misunderstood my proposal, which is clearer in my original draft as published in *The Lancet* for July 17, and *Nature* for July 24. The Editor of *The Times* obliged me to cut down the letter to half its original length, thus apparently obscuring the nature of my suggestion, which referred only to periodicals. This is clear from the heading used by all three editors, but Mr. Francis does not even mention periodicals. One frequently meets cases where, in several different libraries, there are broken sets of a certain rare periodical which, if brought together, would make one complete set. My suggestion is that these broken sets should be brought together, and, in deciding which library is to have the complete set, some regard should be paid to the 'interests of research'. By this I mean that a research worker's time should be saved, so far as is reasonable, by his being able to find complete sets of most of the important periodicals on his own subject in one place. If there are other sets elsewhere so much the better. The 'whole conception' of splitting up great national libraries, as described by Mr. Francis is, I quite agree, 'preposterous.' It is not *my* conception."

Mr. Francis *writes:* "I apologise to Mr. Barnard for seeming to couple his name with a proposal which I am glad to see he regards as 'preposterous.' My intention in referring to his letter was to anticipate any proposals of a similar kind which, I have no doubt, others less sensitive to the needs of our national library would be ready to put forward, if his letter had a favourable reception. I observe, however, that Mr. Barnard, in the above letter has himself somewhat modified his original proposal, which contained no reference to broken sets of certain rare periodicals, but spoke of 'a much larger scheme whereby the present holdings of learned periodicals in *all* libraries would be surveyed and, where necessary, redistributed.' The italics are mine, but it scarcely needs italics to bring out the dangerously sweeping nature of Mr. Barnard's suggestion."

[1] See page 45 and the correspondence on this page.

The Organisation of American Photographic Information Services in Great Britain

By LT. COLONEL IRVING J. NEWMAN

Propaganda, or to use the preferred terminology of the English-speaking peoples, publicity, falls roughly into three groups : the printed word, sound, and pictures. Pictorial publicity has one outstanding advantage over the printed or spoken word ; its language is universal.

Thus if pictorial publicity is not considered the most *important* influence in the propaganda war, it is certainly the one that is simplest to use, and the one most widely acceptable.

Pictorial presentation also offers certain additional advantage over other mediums. It conveys a lasting impression more quickly than the printed or spoken word ; and it gives the impression of truth. We know that pictures are frequently faked, or used in a way to be misleading, but the audience is much more difficult to fool with pictorial fakery than with printed or spoken fabrications.

In the war of words, the wordless publicity of pictures can be used in many mediums. The motion picture screen, while it has the smaller audience, is usually considered the most effective by the experts. While clever editing of still photographs is highly necessary, in motion pictures the results of the final product depend as much on the way a film is put together as upon the actual content, and while a periodical will be tossed aside if its contents fail to hold the interest of the reader, the cinema audience will usually remain throughout a programme, be it good or bad. Thus while a poor publication is simply ineffective, a bad motion picture has a definite negative effect.

But balancing the greater effectiveness of the movie is the smaller audience and the delay in presentation. Like news, pictures can be transmitted over distance by wire and wireless in minutes, but motion pictures require time for transmission, processing, editing and distribution.

These points are the main considerations to-day affecting the way in which still and motion pictures are made and released to the public : friendly, neutral, and enemy. They determine just how much of the publicity effort of an army or a government will be directed toward newsreels, documentary shorts and full-length subjects, and full-length feature pictures of both entertainment and factual types. They determine whether photographs or drawings, or a combination of the two will be used, and in what mediums they will be printed.

The making of photographs in the war effort of any country is not restricted to any one agency. In Britain and the United States, for example, photographs and motion pictures are made by official uniformed photographers of the army, the navy, and the air forces, by civilian correspondents attached or accredited to them, and by civilian governmental departments such as the British Ministry of Information and the American Office of War Information. Distribution is also handled through widely scattered agencies to reach the morning paper or the evening cinema screen.

One way to simplify the rather complex pictorial operations of the war, which by reason of the mechanism used is much more highly involved than news gathering and distribution, is to explain how a picture of a battle in the Mediterranean Theatre reaches the ultimate audience in Britain. Although the British and American methods have minor differences, the explanation of the system in operation in the United States Army will illustrate the general principle.

Cameramen, still and motion picture, with the necessary administrative personnel, are attached to organic units of the Army, Signal Corps photographers to the ground forces and services of supply, and air force cameramen to the air corps. They are responsible for photography, not only for publication, but for training, operational, and archive use as well. Civilian photographers, accredited in much the same way as news writers, are attached to the same units as war correspondents, and are placed under international law in the same non-combatant status.

It is the job of the public relations officer to co-ordinate the efforts of these two groups, and to make a close study of operational plans so that cameramen may be placed in the most advantageous spots for the records to be made. In making this decision, he must first consider one outstanding fact that is seldom, if ever, appreciated by the public. It is also a fact too little understood by many newspaper and newsreel editors. And that is that front-line combat makes the poorest photograph in modern warfare with its dispersed fronts, its foxholes and jungle, its widely spread naval and amphibious operations, and its night battles, the bane of the photographers ; the best pictures are those which present a diversified all-over picture from the rear base to the forward part of the zone of the interior. Most good pictures made of the infantryman and the tank crews at the point of contact with the enemy are not those of actual operations, but re-enactments or training and manoeuver shots. Cameramen who have tried to photograph actual front-line battle scenes—and there are many of them—expose themselves to risks which seldom, if ever, are justified by the results obtained. There are, of course, outstanding exceptions. Tank battles and artillery operations can sometimes be photographed with long focus lenses from occasional vantage points ; a " fortunate " photographer is sometimes aboard the bombed warship ; and as cinema audiences well know, highly successful pictures of bomber raids have been made.

But the best and greater number of photographs show troops moving up to the front, convoys unloading, the entrance of a force into a town abandoned by the enemy, the burning of bombed materiel, the soldier in the training area demonstrating a new weapon, the general at his operational headquarters, the flight of heavy bombers taking off at dusk.

It is also the job of the Public Relations Officer to expedite the shipment of films to the processing and distribution point, normally the largest city within reasonable distance of the front. London is such a distributing point, so is Cairo, and in a lesser sense, Algiers. Still pictures are normally forwarded in the form of developed negatives, and motion pictures in the undeveloped state ; this is because movies require elaborate equipment for proper finishing, and a city the size of Algiers has very limited laboratory facilities for cinematographic work. Both stills and movies, however, are of necessity accompanied by complete caption material to form the final published " cutlines " or cinema commentary. Thus the photographer who is trained in news work must also be a capable reporter. His " dope sheets " carrying information of time, place and action, names, rank, and designations of individuals and groups, can usually in themselves form a very adequate news story.

A few select photographs are developed close to the front in mobile or semi-permanent dark-rooms and turned over to radio picture transmitters in Algiers or Cairo. The stations are operated by both services and civilian information agencies as well as by commercial radio and cable companies. The pictures are transmitted to London, Washington and New York, where they are distributed, and, in some cases, retransmitted by radio throughout the world.

By far the largest bulk of material, however, is shipped by air to London and Washington. On reaching the public relations offices in London, the film is sorted, the service material being sent to the appropriate army or navy laboratory, and the film from correspondents sent to the picture agency or newsreel by whom the photographer is employed.

Practically all " operational " material made by correspondents is pooled; and within the limits of security, the official film is released to all publications and newsreels. The mechanism for release of newsreel material is simple. The official film is usually first viewed by censors and a public relations officer who selects the footage he feels will be of value for release. It is then viewed by an editor from each of the five British newsreels and " lavenders " (master positives) struck off for each reel desiring the story by a duty company selected on a rota basis. At the same time positives are made for shipment to the United States, where a similar pool is operated by the five American reels in New York. Further prints are made for the use of British and American official agencies. Foreign language reels are made up by the newsreels working with the Ministry of Information and the Office of War Information for distribution to neutrals, allies, and occupied countries. While a certain amount of official policy governs what these reels contain, the laws of supply and demand operate in the world of news as well as in the commodity market; and it is experienced editors rather than propaganda men who determine the content of cinema news.

Reels are released in London twice weekly (Monday and Thursday), and fresh material goes into the making of each release. They are normally slightly less than one reel in length and run about eight minutes on the screen. A British reel will normally contain from three to five stories, an American reel about twice that number of shorter subjects. However, in the case of an important story, such as the first landing in North Africa, or the finale of the Tunisian campaign, the entire reel will be devoted to one story.

After the required prints are made from the official or newsreel correspondents story, the film is turned over to the producers of the feature length pictures. British and American film is exchanged and pooled with footage from other countries, including enemy film captured or obtained from neutrals. It is frequently found at this point that additional footage on certain subjects as well as " cut-in " shots are needed to complete a short subject or full-length feature picture. Instruction is then sent back through the same channels, and as far as it is practicable this film is made of operations, or of re-enactments on the actual location. Infrequently such re-enactments, particularly of the difficult night scenes, are made on studio lots with troops borrowed for the purpose. Such scenes, however, are made only when actually necessary to tell the complete story and are kept to a bare minimum.

The men who make these pictures are drawn as far as possible from photographers trained in civilian life. Service men and correspondents alike are put through severe army training, including in many cases, commando assault courses, and the same high altitude flight schools that train the bomber crews. There is no " strategic reserve " with cameramen. They are in the fighting areas for much longer periods than soldiers of any one unit. They have no rest camps or rear-area replacement centres. Casualties are high, and the strain is great. While some of the equipment is new and of the latest type, the loss in action of much irreplaceable gear has meant that many of the men must make do with patched-up cameras. In many cases, particularly in aerial photography, the men themselves have designed and built special equipment to improve the quality of their work.

While still-picture men normally work alongside cinematographers in the field, the distribution of still photographs is much more complete. An example of this can be shown by the method of release of the " bomb strike " photographs made by the automatic cameras in the Flying Fortresses of the 8th Air Force. The rolls of film are developed at the bomber stations and the selected negatives are expedited to a central laboratory where fifteen prints and three duplicate negatives are made from each. After interpretation, captioning, and censorship, four prints are delivered to the four agencies representing the American picture pool in London. These are sent by air and surface to New York for distribution in the Americas, and selected prints radioed not only to New York, but to such centres as Melbourne, Madrid, Cairo, Moscow,

Capetown, Stockholm. In the United States they reach the press through the three large picture agencies, Associated Press, Acme, and International News Photos.

Two of the prints and a duplicate negative are sent to the Ministry of Information. The prints are used for official publication, and further overseas and radio uses. The negative is given to one of two agency groups, the British International Press Photos Association (the so-called American group) or the Photo News Agency (the " British " group). These agencies, on behalf of their members, distribute the pictures to the entire British press and make up packets for further overseas shipment. Other prints of the fifteen and other duplicate negatives are given to the Office of War Information for use of American governmental distribution, and shipped to the War Department in Washington for tactical study and official publication. Further prints and negatives are used in *Stars and Stripes* and *Yank*, the American soldiers' newspapers, and to fill future publication requests.

The pictures shipped from the theatres of war by the correspondents are handled directly by the agencies rather than by the association groups. They are, however, in the case of combat material, pooled both in London and New York. This is not done to discourage competition, which in war as in peace, helps to maintain high photographic standards, but because of pure necessity. Not only is the number of competent photographers limited, but the complexities of living, transportation, and communications in the war zones strictly limits the number of men that can be accommodated on any front. In practice, not only the pictures, but the correspondent-photographers, are pooled, the number in any one area being determined by military officials in London and Washington. The reason for the differences in distribution of official and correspondent photographs in London lies in the basic difference of the methods of operation of American and British agencies. In the United States, most pictures appearing in any one publication are furnished by one or more of the three big agencies on a long-time contract basis. The price depends on the total requirements of each paper over this period, and every paper has supplied to it all the pictures it wants within those requirements. " Exclusive " sales are not made by these agencies.

In Britain, however, each agency (and there are about ten large ones, many smaller ones) has as customers, not a contracted group but the entire press of the United Kingdom, and each picture is sold on an individual basis. In peacetime this leads to a highly competitive situation with each agency racing the others to place the first pictures on the desks of photo editors from one end of Fleet Street to the other. Exclusive sales of exceptionally newsworthy shots are frequently made, some national dailies paying hundreds, or even thousands, of pounds for the sole publication rights of a picture. Since, in war-time, the front-line pictures are pooled, and the services providing the facilities prohibit exclusive sales, it is simpler for the associations in which the agencies are grouped to distribute the pictures. It provides the world-wide press with official photographs using the civilian machinery already in operation, prevents for the most part the competition of government against established commercial enterprises, gives those enterprises a fair profit, and furnishes the papers with adequate coverage at nominal fees.

But not all war pictures are made on the field of battle. In fact, by far the largest number of photograph and newsreel stories are made on the home front. These, too, are made by both official and civilian cameramen. The civilian agency photographers, as well as those attached directly to individual publications, and the newsreel companies, are used for this coverage as far as possible. Service men are mainly used for photographs that are not to be published, or where, because of limited or restricted facilities, civilians cannot be used. This, again, is based on the established principle that the army does not wish to discourage commercial enterprise, nor to compete with it.

On stories of an important nature—the arrival of high ranking officers, the demonstration of new equipment or methods, the opening of new camps and stations, manoeuvers and war exercises—general invitations are issued. In some cases, this results in as many as fifty photographers on one assignment, and, of course, wide coverage results. However, individuals are encouraged to apply for exclusive stories, particularly of the feature type ; and, if a general invitation or " sortie " is not contemplated by the Public Relations Officer, arrangements are made, and in most cases a conducting officer assigned to assist in carrying out the assignment. Newspapers are unlikely to use pictures of the feature type if they are made available to the entire press ; this is the reason for the encouragement of this type of coverage.

Occasionally facilities are such that only a minimum number of cameramen can be accommodated on an assignment. In this case, application is made to the agency association, and to the newsreel and newspaper proprietors associations for " rota " coverage. Each association maintains lists where agencies are assigned in turn for this type of story, the picture agency in this case being entitled to sole rights for the sales in the United Kingdom, but providing prints to other members agencies for overseas use. The newspaper staff photographers and newsreel cameramen, however, pool their material on assignments of this type. On such a limited facility, one would usually find a cameraman from a B.I.P.P.A. agency, one from a P.N.A. agency, one from a national daily, one from a provincial daily, one from the American pool, an American pool newsreel cameraman, a British newsreel crew with sound equipment, and an official still and motion picture cameraman. But this miniature camera army is a great deal easier to handle where facilities are limited than the fifty men who might apply as the result of a general invitation on an important story.

In most cases pictures are released as soon as the men return to Fleet Street and Wardour Street. However, where security demands otherwise, an " embargo," or release time, may be placed on the pictures. When this condition is required, distribution will take place, but publication before the embargo time is prohibited. In the case of photographs of equipment stopped by censor, a " hold for release " embargo may be placed on the story if the removal of the stop is imminent. Such a case might be the photographing of a new type of aircraft, publication to be held up until the censor gives notification that the aircraft has been committed to action and the enemy is aware of its use. Postponing the making of such pictures until announcement of the new plane is made in the Press might result in the pictures following the story by several days, which is an unsatisfactory situation from a publicity standpoint.

Official photographers are used a great deal for " home town " pictures. Soldiers from the same community are pictured individually or in groups at work in their everyday army jobs. These pictures, together with full information about the soldiers' civilian occupation, parents' names, and his army job, are released directly to the American newspapers in those communities. In the same way special interest stories are sent to the trade papers. In these cases there is no competition with agencies, as they do not have adequate facilities for coverage of this type, nor would it prove profitable to them.

The United States Army makes no provision for release to the British Press of official pictures or newsreels from the United States. These pictures are released by the War Department in Washington to the American agencies, who distribute them through the London agencies representing them. These London agencies maintain huge files of material of this type, from which nearly every army photograph ever made is available to interested publications.

(Aslib members were given a private showing of the American military colour film " Report from the Aleutians," with an introduction by Lt. Colonel Newman, at the Film House, 142, Wardour Street, W.1.—Ed.).

The Co-ordination of Abstracting

This was a "general discussion" intended primarily to give the users of Abstracting services an opportunity for reviewing the present position and exchanging views with regard to the compilation and use of abstracts in day-to-day practice. The following questionnaire had been circulated among members before the meeting:

(1) *Is your particular field of interest adequately covered by existing Abstracting services? Is there duplication of services in this field?*

(2) *Does your organisation run its own Abstracting service? If so, is it because:* (a) *The field is not covered by existing services,* (b) *The existing services are too slow, or* (c) *The existing services cannot cater for your own special needs?*

(3) *Could a centralized Abstracting service adequately serve:* (a) *Your special field of interest;* (b) *Secondary interests indirectly related to your main field of research?*

(4) *What practical suggestions can you put forward for the improvement of the present position?*

Those present were invited to hand in, after the Conference, written notes on their replies, particularly to question 4. Members' contributions received in response to this invitation are appended to the report of this discussion.

The Chair was taken by Professor R. S. Hutton, who spoke of Aslib's long-continued interest in Abstracting as evidenced by papers and discussions at several Conferences, notably in 1931[1], 1932[2], 1933 (Professor Philip's paper)[3] and 1937, when Dr. Bradford, following up the lead he had given by his article in *Engineering*[4] in 1934, produced an up-to-date instructive survey of Abstracting and Indexing practice[5]. At the 1939 Conference the proposal for a rational form of "analytical" abstracts, originally submitted to the U.S. National Research Council, was described in a paper[6] by Dr. Fulcher, the distinguished American physicist.

Professor Hutton expressed his support for Dr. Bradford's scheme for a centralization of indexing of scientific periodicals on which specialist institutions could draw and thus gain access to publications in unusual journals.

In the discussion the following took part: Dr. S. C. Bradford, Mr. G. H. Davison, Dr. W. E. Batten, Mr. T. D. Smith, Dr. A. King, Mr. F. M. Wright, Miss E. W. Parker, Mr. B. Fullman, Mr. B. Agard Evans, Miss A. M. Mostel, Mr. W. E. Fuller, Mrs. M. Wood Ure, Dr. H. R. Lang, Mr. H. Dowden, Dr. R. S. Schultze, Mr. R. L. Sheppard, Miss G. E. Lockie, Mr. E. N. Simons and Mr. R. G. Thorne.

Dr. S. C. Bradford thanked Professor Hutton for his kind appreciation, and said that what little he had himself been able to contribute to the progress of bibliography had been due to exceptional facilities in the Science Library and to the able collaboration of his colleagues there. His difficulty had been to discover, among the enormous number of abstracts of, and subject references to, original scientific and technical papers, what had been recorded about any particular topic. Search among the forty million references in the Science Library might take weeks, and then additional papers would keep turning up, almost by accident. Moreover, it was impossible not to notice much repetition of previous work by fresh investigators.

[1] Sir F. L. Nathan. Eighth Aslib Conference Report, 1931, pp. 36–40.
[2] A. A. Eldridge. Ninth Aslib Conference Report, 1932, pp. 83–90.
[3] J. C. Philip. Tenth Aslib Conference Report, 1933, pp. 74–77.
[4] S. C. Bradford. *Engineering*, January 26, 1934.
[5] S. C. Bradford. Fourteenth Aslib Conference Report, 1937, pp. 59–71.
[6] G. S. Fulcher. Sixteenth Aslib Conference Report, 1939, pp. 41–45.

An obvious cause of these difficulties was the almost complete lack of uniformity in the subject classification of abstracts and references, whereas the general adoption of the Universal Decimal Classification as an universal bibliographical language would unite bibliographers in all countries and adapt their abstracts and notices to fit together into a single index, where all the references to information on a particular topic would fall into one place to be found at a glance.

So the British Society for International Bibliography was founded to study the principles of co-ordination in bibliography with a view to the production of a complete index to knowledge.

The first task of the Society, Dr. Bradford explained, was to gather together, or determine, the data relevant to the publication of literature in the field of pure and applied science and of abstracts and subject references to it. It was found that few such data were known, and two of his mathematical friends, Mr. E. Lancaster-Jones and Mr. H. T. Pledge, undertook to make the tiresome statistical investigations needed to deduce these data. Professor Hutton had called attention to these data, which must be taken into account in organising an efficient bibliographical service.

The next step in the study of the bibliographical position was to ascertain the cause of the failure to index one-half to two-thirds of the useful published information. It was easy to see that this lay in the lack of co-ordination between bibliographers and bibliographical undertakings, each working more or less independently to abstract or index the literature of a separate subject, neglecting the general principle that Science is one. Because every branch of science was related to every other branch, and a discovery in any field might be of use in any other field, it followed, of necessity, that any scientific periodical might contain, at one time or another, information of value from a particular point of view, outside the specific scope of that periodical. Consequently, information relative to any special subject might be contained in any periodical and was, in fact, scattered throughout the whole mass of scientific periodical literature.

Mr. Lancaster-Jones investigated this phenomenon and deduced the Law of Scattering, which could be stated thus : If periodicals were arranged in the order of the number of papers they contained in a given period on a particular topic, the periodicals fell into groups containing the same aggregate number of papers on that topic, and the numbers of periodicals in the groups were related in the proportion of $1 : n ; n^2$, or thereabouts, where n was about five. You had a nucleus of periodicals devoted to the particular subject or to the smallest larger subject, of which the special subject forms a part. Suppose this nucleus comprised twenty periodicals and they contained in all a hundred papers on the subject in a year. In the second group, comprising periodicals on General Science and subjects closely related to the given subject, there would be about 5×20, or a hundred, periodicals, and these would also contain about a hundred papers on the subject in a year. Then there would be a third group of periodicals numbering $5^2 \times 20$, or five hundred, periodicals also containing papers on the subject at the rate of one hundred a year, or one in five years, on the average. Beyond this, other papers occurred, scattered in the mass of 15,000 scientific periodicals. Further, there was no criterion by which a periodical in the third group could be identified as containing papers on the subject. The only way to pick it out was to search the whole mass. And, having discovered that a certain periodical contained one paper in five years, there was no guarantee that it would ever contain another.

Thus, Dr. Bradford continued, it followed inevitably that to make a complete list of papers on any topic, the whole mass of scientific periodicals must be searched methodically, and this was the nearly impossible task which each abstracting or indexing service set itself, in undertaking to deal with the literature of one particular subject. This investigation was described in *Publication Number* 1 of the Society.

The causes of the deficiency of bibliographical services being now clear, the British Society for International Bibliography had, therefore, two main purposes : (1) to secure that all scientific and technical literature should be abstracted, or indexed and (2) to bring about the co-ordination of the classification of bibliographical references, so that these might fit together into a single index to knowledge.

Dr. Bradford here pointed out that altogether a complete general index to scientific literature would comprise threequarters of a million references annually; it would not take the place of detailed indexes to the literature of very limited subjects. Such a general index would serve to facilitate the preparation of special bibliographies by bringing to notice papers that must inevitably be missed by what might be called the second line abstractors, who could not possibly search the whole mass of literature.

For the compilation of the general index, two methods presented themselves : (1) the establishment of a central organisation to carry out all the work, or (2) the use of existing autonomous, self-supporting bibliographical institutions, producing, already, as many bibliographical notices as there were useful papers published.

The main objections to the first course were : (1) That it would duplicate work already being done by existing agencies to meet a definite demand, and, unless it provided abstracts, could never hope to displace those agencies which did. (2) If only an index were provided, it would be seven times as large as the *International Catalogue of Scientific Literature* and would cost about £40,000 a year; if abstracts were provided, the cost would be five times as much, and (3) the undertaking would be likely to fail for lack of demand, as did the *International Catalogue*. Therefore, the Society has never adopted the idea of a central organisation, unless it should evolve eventually by the amalgamation of existing institutions. The only essential condition is the co-ordination of their work.

The second project, Dr. Bradford said, to make use of autonomous, self-supporting, existing undertakings, had none of the disadvantages of the first. Should one undertaking cease to function, there would be, generally, another covering the same subject, and the work as a whole would go on. The cost of the scheme would be incomparably less, because the agencies were already self-supporting, and economies introduced by co-ordination might reduce or even eliminate the extra cost of covering additional papers, and the existing staff was already well trained and experienced. All that was required was, merely, to allocate all periodicals containing useful papers among the existing bibliographical agencies, so that every paper in every periodical was scrutinized, and to arrange that each bureau should deal, as before, with the papers within its scope, and pass title references of all others in its group of periodicals to the bureaux that dealt with their respective subjects. This could be done easily by adding short Decimal Classification numbers. If, in addition, each bureau added complete decimal numbers to the papers it treated itself, all the bibliographical entries would fit together into one comprehensive index to knowledge. No cheaper, more permanent or more comprehensive scheme could be desired.

Dr. Bradford described how, since its foundation in 1927, the British Society for International Bibliography had worked steadily on these lines : (1) It had been successful in inducing about thirty bibliographical institutions in this country to adopt the Decimal Classification for classifying their abstracts and notices. Thus, with a rather larger number of co-ordinated agencies abroad, some 150,000 references to Scientific and Technical literature had been classified by the Decimal Classification annually. These were incorporated in an index in the Science Library, which now included about three million cards. This

number of references constituted threefifths of the total number of papers abstracted each year. (2) As the progress of this work was hindered by the absence of an English edition of the classification, the British Society for International Bibliography had been most fortunate in arranging for the publication of an English edition by the British Standards Institution as a British Standard. Aslib was greatly helping this work through representatives on the Editorial Committee. (3) The proper and necessary function of libraries in the scheme had been studied and set out in *Publication Number* 2 of the Society. (4) To secure the co-ordination of Abstracts, the Society had set up a Committee for the Co-ordination of the Cataloguing of Scientific and Technical Literature, on which important abstracting bureaux were represented. This Committee had held several meetings and its work was making most encouraging progress. (5) The Society had been instrumental in creating the nucleus of a service for the supply of information on any topic. Such a service must be founded, eventually, on a complete index to recorded information and a complete set of records, the nucleus being based on the forty million references in the Science Library and its collection of Scientific and Technical books and periodicals. For the same reasons, as for the Abstracting services, the information service should be based on existing autonomous bibliographical agencies, with a central index to deal with enquiries overlapping several subjects. The nucleus established comprised the information service at the Science Library, supplemented by the Central Agricultural and Scientific Bibliography incorporated in the Society. This service corresponded almost exactly to the Dutch Institute of Documentation and other national information services abroad. Through lack of interest, the Society's service was not much used—but with a small charge for information supplied, it could meet any demands.

In conclusion, Dr. Bradford claimed that the British Society for International Bibliography had made a detailed examination of the bibliographical position, had proposed a simple, comparatively inexpensive and complete solution, and had gone a long way towards achieving it.

Mr. G. H. Davison, referring to the Questionnaire, said that (1) the monthly Bulletin of the Iron and Steel Institute formed an admirable, comprehensive collection of abstracts from available current literature and, so far as he knew, had no rival in this country. As to (2) his organisation maintained its own abstracting service chiefly because (*a*) this provided a quicker means of disseminating information of value than the I.S.I. bulletin, a time-lag being inevitable in circulating material from any monthly publication; (*b*) busy people, especially in war-time, could not always find opportunity to read a comprehensive collection of abstracts. So his organisation did not confine itself to circulating such a collection, but endeavoured also to select the cream of abstracts especially suitable for circulation to specific members of the staff in various works. Nevertheless, the I.S.I. bulletin proved extremely valuable: it served a dual purpose, as an *indexed* record of metallurgical publications and as a check on their own reading to ensure that nothing of importance was missed; (*c*) the particular interests of his organisation, being somewhat wider than those of iron and steel production, covered additional items outside the normal scope of the Iron and Steel Institute.

Regarding (3) Mr. Davison was doubtful if anything would be gained by centralizing all abstracting. In his branch of industry, as in others, efficient abstracting entailed more or less specialized knowledge, and that might not be so readily available in a centralized service, which would, therefore, have to employ experts from each field; this, in principle, would seem to differ in no way from present practice, except as to control. At the moment the Iron and Steel industry accepted its own responsibility for abstracting, and the industry might even lose by shelving that responsibility.

In reply to (4) Mr. Davison suggested that (*a*) any national central service might usefully include copies of, or reference to, the abstracts prepared by each industry whose existing service already proved efficient, rather than do the work over again; (*b*) no abstracting service was yet available in the field of Plastics, but certainly one was needed. The literature on this increasingly complex subject was now becoming so vast that any attempt to begin an abstracting service should be preceded by a carefully planned sub-classification to facilitate reference. Immediate action should be taken in this direction before the accumulation of printed matter on the subject proved too formidable. (*c*) American abstracting journals, particularly in war-time, often contained interesting items which could not be followed up because the publications specified were not available in this country—sometimes not even in the U.S.A. Would it not be wise, Mr. Davison asked, to make the rule that an abstracting service should quote only from matter actually available? This method would eliminate doubts which might otherwise arise as to the accuracy of abstracts copied from other sources and, too, would prevent the waste of time often spent in vain attempts to procure publications quoted but not obtainable.

Dr. W. E. Batten pointed out that already a beginning had been made upon two classifications of Plastics, by (1) the Research Association of British Rubber Manufacturers in the *Journal of Rubber Research* and by (2) Interscience Publications, New York, in loose-leaf abstract service, entitled *Resins—Rubber—Plastics*, edited by Mr. H. Mark and E. S. Proskauer, and issued from 1942 onwards. The latter embodied a fairly elaborate decimal system.

Mr. T. D. Smith said that the particular field of interest of his Association was covered by a large number of weekly and monthly bulletins, all publishing abstracts, and a certain amount of duplication inevitably resulted. At present the Association made their own abstracts for internal use only, but they would support some form of centralized abstracting service which could supply abstracts of the standard required. He agreed that a service consisting of abstractors, each specializing in a particular subject, would be more valuable than services producing a number of abstracts, in many cases by abstractors not conversant with the subject. To quote an example, the standard of the Metallurgical Abstracts, produced by a panel of the Institute of Metals abstractors, if applied to more technical and somewhat less theoretical subjects, would meet the current demands of industry, at present served by separate abstract bulletins.

Dr. A. King supported the idea of a centralized service. The war had brought to London scientists of the Commonwealth who were working on similar lines, and it would be a good thing to try to set up an organisation to continue such an arrangement in peace time. But whilst a centralized abstracting service seemed desirable, he would not advise cutting out others. There might well be one service covering the English-speaking world employing U.S. abstractors to deal with American publications and British to deal with British publications.

Mr. F. M. Wright doubted the wisdom of the policy, suggested by Mr. Davison, of not publishing abstracts of papers which were not available.

Miss E. W. Parker thought it might be desirable, on the long view, to know of the existence of such papers, even if they were difficult or impossible to obtain. Dr. King's centralized scheme might meet nearly all needs.

Professor Hutton asked if an abstract were to be a critical review or an index to the contents. He submitted that this distinction was important.

Mr. B. Fullman said that abstracts published in the authoritative abstracting journals provided a permanent record, and, therefore, should be prepared by those actively engaged in the fields of research concerned.

Mr. B. Agard Evans disagreed with that view. The specialist was the very worst man to abstract a paper, more particularly if he were allowed to make a critical abstract; prejudice for his own pet theory was bound to intrude. On the main theme, however, there was a class of abstract well illustrated in Road Abstracts: these were addressed largely to road engineers in this country and in the Empire, who were, more often than not, far from access to quite ordinary technical literature. In their case it was necessary to provide the informative abstract which would give them the substance of the more important papers on their subject rather than a mere reference. Duplication of abstracts was not the evil it was represented to be by the more tidy minded; it was, on the contrary, highly desirable if all the papers on a particular subject were to be presented in a convenient form. The problem of the repetitive paper had been mentioned: to cut this out it was necessary to have a man reading fairly widely in a comparatively small field, i.e. the editor of a sectional abstracting journal. A central abstracting service could not do it.

A central *index* might be extremely useful to help the abstracts editor to spot suitable material outside his normal range of reading, but a central abstracting bureau could not but fail to provide so useful a service as rendered by the present system. Mr. Evans expressed particular interest in Mr. Davison's practice of circulating individual abstracts: within his own department abstracts on single sheets were supplied to officers interested in particular aspects of the whole. These sheets, when collected together, formed useful bibliographies.

Miss A. M. Mostel said that the organization which she represented found its own field of research covered by many services, but had still to bring together for its own purposes all the points of special interest.

Mr. W. E. Fuller favoured collaboration in team-work between the scientist and the professional abstractors as the best plan. The 15,000 unabstracted journals were relatively negligible, for important articles were reproduced in the main journals.

Dr. H. R. Lang, speaking in his private capacity and not on behalf of the Institute of Physics, recalled that in 1941 the attention of the Board of the Institute of Physics was called to the inadequacy of the abstracts services in respect of papers on technical applied and industrial physics. Physicists in industry had expressed a desire to have their attention called to papers containing items concerned with applications of physics to various practical problems. Papers appearing from time to time in technological and trade journals contained accounts of important developments in that direction. The main subject of such a paper was often of no special interest to the physicist, but some particular part of it might be of the greatest importance to him in his own particular line of work. For example, a paper might be concerned with some achievement in the manufacture of a particular metal object and incidentally contain a useful contribution to high-frequency technique (in connection with the high-frequency furnace used) or, perhaps, to X-ray crystallography. The Board of the Institute, being in contact with a Committee of Science Abstractors on this subject, would, he knew, be interested in any schemes devised to meet this demand.

A single abstract of a paper, however perfect, could not meet all requirements, since each group of workers was interested in a different aspect—one in the final results, another in the apparatus, another in the method of preparation of specimens and so on. Therefore, in Dr. Lang's view, most of the specialized abstracting services must continue, whatever might be decided about a central service. In any event, it seemed to him that the larger organizations would continue to maintain their own information and abstracting services which had been built up over a period of years, to suit their own particular ends, and had become an integral part of their organizations.

Dr. Lang said he did not know why it was so frequently suggested that an abstract should be issued at the very earliest possible moment after publication of the original paper. Even before the war (and nowadays it was worse), there was normally a delay of several months between the receipt of a MS. and the publication of the paper, and there was no telling how long between the completion of the work and the submission of the final MS. Surely a few weeks more could not make all that difference, especially as most scientists knew fairly well what their contemporaries were doing. He suggested that abstractors should constantly have in mind the primary object for which they were employed, namely, to keep those scientists who were too fully occupied to peruse all the scientific periodicals informed of the gist of more important papers; in this way they could ensure that the scientist did not miss anything important. That was the ideal to be aimed at; but in practice there was nothing, he believed, which your scientist disliked more, particularly under existing conditions, than to have masses of abstracts put in front of him just because it was possible that he might be interested in some of them. The ideal would be reached by the information service acting as a pre-selector, for then the scientist at least knew that what it had submitted was worth a cursory glance, if no more. But in all these cases personalities and individual idiosyncrasies must be considered, and it was up to the Information Department to serve the scientific staff in whatever way was best in the particular set of conditions prevailing.

Mr. H. Dowden endorsed what had been said by Mr. Fuller and Dr. Lang. It was noteworthy that the headquarters of the D.S.I.R. embraced all branches of science, but each organization issued its own abstracts.

Dr. R. S. Schultze was not convinced of the value of centralized abstracting. Quite often the specialist was interested in some small detail in a paper: for example, the glass technologist was interested in the type of glass used for a certain investigation. The abstractor, unless he were considering the article from this particular angle, would not as a rule mention the detail concerning the glass, and such an abstract coming from a centralized service would, therefore, be of no value to such a specialist. Similarly, in spectrographic analysis, the abstractor would not usually go into details of the photographic materials employed.

Mr. R. L. Sheppard spoke of the Bulletins issued by his Bureau, which contained abstracts of the literature relating to tropical diseases, public health and the medical problems of the war. These abstracts were written by experts who, being associated with research in the subjects they reviewed, were thus able to give helpful guidance to readers, some of whom were young medical men stationed in Colonies away from libraries and from contact with professional colleagues. Mr. Sheppard concurred with the views expressed by Lord Hankey's Committee in its recent Report on the Imperial Agricultural Bureaux that this identity of interest of the writers and users of abstracts was essential, and that a central abstracting organization which attempted to cover world scientific information would lose itself in the immensity and variety of its task.

Miss G. E. Lockie suggested that intelligent use of the Universal Decimal Classification would indicate cross-references where more than one aspect of a subject was covered.

Mr. Eric N. Simons emphasised how difficulties arose from lack of standardisation in the nomenclature of technical terms. The B.S.I. had a Committee on the nomenclature of cutting tools. Mr. R. G. Thorne said that the establishment he represented was considering the possibilities of using Basic English plus the B.S.I. standard of aeronautical terms.

Notes contributed by members after the Conference :

Mr. V. F. Henley, writing on behalf of his Company, which specialises in the treatment of Metals to prevent corrosion, states that the Company produces its own abstract journal and also uses abstracts from other sources. Mr. Henley indicates in the following summary " some of the problems that have arisen in the past, or will possibly arise in the event of a central abstracting bureau being instituted ":

Purpose of Abstracts

" The primary object of abstracting is to place on record the existence of a particular piece of literature. The shortest abstracts, therefore, contain only the title, source and the author's name. In addition to notifying the general existence of the source of reference, an abstract will also contain a brief summary of the subject matter. Where the abstract has been made by an academic body or a non-specializing organisation we do not consider that abstracts should be critical. The obvious objection to central abstracting has been that points of special interest might be overlooked in favour of those of general interest, hence the large number of specialized abstracting services that have now been set up by various industries."

Scope of Abstracts

" If a central abstracting bureau were to be instituted, we suggest that abstracts should be produced non-critically covering briefly the main subject matter. At the same time the various specialized abstracting organisations in industry should prepare their abstracts in the usual way, and copies of these should be sent to the central bureau so as to complete the abstracting picture. This would also enable the central bureau to assess to what extent unnecessary duplication has occurred. Apart from the obvious duplication that arises from several organisations abstracting the same article, there is a further duplication arising from the vicious practice of re-printing papers given to learned societies in various journals. It is not uncommon to find the same contribution abstracted from four or five different sources. In our opinion the abstracting should only be carried out on *original* articles, except where originals are unobtainable."

Foreign Translations

" It is in the field of foreign translation that the greatest duplication occurs, and there is no doubt whatever that this can be avoided without in any way interfering with the activities of special abstracting bureaux. There has always been a serious shortage of good translators, and it would be in the national interest to ensure that all qualified translators were housed at the central bureau, so that in the first instance all foreign journals can be translated ***in toto***. The translation could then be abstracted in a general way by the central bureau, and copies of the full translation could be borrowed or circulated to the various specialized abstracting organizations where special abstracts could be made."

Relationship between Central Abstracting and Central Library

" There would be certain obvious advantages if a central abstracting bureau were to operate on the same premises as the central library, and to these organizations there should be attached an information organization such as Aslib, which would be in a position to advise subscribers on sources of books, abstracts, translations, microfilms, etc.

Mr. Francis Hughes, whose firm is a member of the scientific instrument industry, points out that " the range of its interest in scientific matters is firstly not confined to any particular branch of science and, secondly, is auxiliary to the interests of other industries".

Referring specifically to the Questionnaire, Mr. Hughes writes : " As to Question (1), speaking for ourselves and not for the scientific industry, there are no existing abstract services specifically devoted to instrument engineering. A number of aircraft magazines cover aircraft instruments in an indiscriminate fashion, especially with reference to patent literature. The International Hydrographic Bureau at Monaco before the war appears to have been the only nautical institution covering marine navigational instruments, and speaking quite frankly, their abstracting was inclined to be amateurish and haphazard. Our research engineers do consult sections (*a*) and (*b*) of *Science Abstracts* probably more than any other service. In the aviation field, of course, there is a weekly press summary issued by the Society of British Aircraft Constructors. In so far as this is an abstracting service it includes political and financial as well as scientific matters."

" Our answer to Question (2) is ' No,' and our answer to Question (3), parts (*a*) and (*b*) is ' Yes ' in both cases, but it will be appreciated, of course, that our specific interests in a central abstracting service would be very specialized.

" In answering Question (4) we would suggest that the most competent source of guidance on this subject would be the British Scientific Instrument Research Association in conjunction, of course, with interested members. The guiding principle would, in our opinion, be measurement, and this principle is involved in the whole literature of physics and engineering, not forgetting, of course, the fields of optics and electronics."

Final Session

During the final session an informal meeting was held for the discussion of matters of Aslib interest with the Hon. Officers and the General Secretary of the Association. No detailed notes were taken, but the main points were as follow :

The General Secretary summarised the services given by Aslib to its members and stressed the difficulties of its present financial situation. The demands on Aslib's services had enormously increased, so that it was no longer possible to deal with them adequately with the existing staff. On the other hand, in spite of the rise in the cost of all overheads, the subscriptions had remained at the pre-war rates and, in many cases, where full advantage of the Enquiry Bureau was taken, no longer really covered the cost of the work undertaken. Thus, the satisfactory increase in the number of members did not necessarily mean that the increase in the amount received from subscriptions was proportionate to the necessary extensions of service. To fulfil its function adequately it was most urgent that Aslib should obtain both an enlarged income sufficient to pay for the necessary staff and overheads, and also some form of special subscriptions or grants which would provide funds for a move to premises that would house the larger staff.

The financial situation was discussed from various aspects. Many members were in favour of raising the rate of subscriptions, though the varied nature of the membership rendered it probable that only some scheme of differential rates, notwithstanding all their attendant difficulties, could meet the many types of demand made on Aslib's services. Professor R. S. Hutton drew attention to the appeal for special funds, which was just on the point of being sent out to a selected number of members likely to be sympathetic to Aslib's needs.

Finally, the following resolution was put forward and accepted :

> That the Council should proceed with the Appeal and that there should also be an immediate appointment of a committee to investigate the raising of the subscription rates in order to increase the income of Aslib.

Offers of help in connection with the investigation of the subscription rates and of improved publicity were received from : Mr. Ivor B. N. Evans, Mr. P. A. White, Mr. Francis Hughes, Mr. B. Agard Evans, and Mr. Eric N. Simons.

The session closed with votes of thanks to the Royal Society for their hospitality, to Colonel Newman for the exhibition of the film and the display of photographic " stills," and to the Hon. Officers and the General Secretary and Staff of Aslib for their part in the organisation of the Conference.

Report of the Eighteenth Annual General Meeting

The Eighteenth Annual General Meeting of members and associate members was held at 10.30 a.m. on Saturday, September 18th, 1943, at the Rooms of the Royal Society, London, W.1.

Present : Fifty-eight members and associate members were present.

Chairman : Professor R. S. Hutton, D.Sc., M.A. (President of the Association) acted as Chairman of the Meeting.

Item I. Minutes of the Last General Meeting.

The Minutes of the Seventeenth Annual General Meeting, having been printed and circulated in the Report of the Proceedings of the Seventeenth Conference, 1942, were taken as read. It was agreed unanimously that they should be confirmed and signed as correct by the Chairman.

Item II. Audited Statement of Accounts, 1942-43.

The Audited Statement of Accounts, which had already been circulated, was presented by the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. E. Lancaster-Jones. Their adoption was proposed by Mr. B. Fullman, seconded by Miss M. E. Whitaker, and carried unanimously.

Item III. Election of Council.

The Chairman drew attention to the following eight members of the Council who were due to retire by rotation under Article 25 of the Articles of Association : Mr. Theodore Besterman, Dr. S. C. Bradford, Mr. Edward Carter, Mr. James J. Eaton, Mr. B. M. Headicar, Mr. E. Lancaster-Jones, Dr. L. Newcombe and Miss E. W. Parker. All these, being eligible, offered themselves for re-election with the exception of Dr. S. C. Bradford, whose resignation had been received with great regret. In addition the Aslib Council had nominated Dr. Wilfrid Bonser of the University of Birmingham. Since the list of nominees had been circulated with the Agenda the Chairman suggested that the elections and re-election should be taken *en bloc*. The proposal was carried unanimously. (The full list of members will be found on page 4).

Item IV. Election of the President and Honorary Officers.

On the proposal of Mr. Edward Carter (Chairman of the Aslib Council) it was unanimously agreed that Professor R. S. Hutton, D.Sc., M.A., should be re-elected as President for the ensuing year. On the proposal of the Chairman it was unanimously agreed that Mr. Theodore Besterman and Mr. E. Lancaster-Jones should be re-elected as Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer respectively.

Item V. Election of Auditors.

It was proposed by Mr. H. H. Johnson and seconded by Miss W. Lewis that Messrs. West & Drake should be re-elected Auditors to the Association until the next Annual General Meeting. The proposal was carried unanimously.

Item VI. Report of the Year's Work of Aslib.

The Chairman called upon the Honorary Secretary, Mr. Theodore Besterman, to summarise the report of the Year's Work of Aslib, printed in full on pages 11-13. In his survey the Hon. Secretary mentioned the fact that some of Aslib's activities could not be reported at present, but when, in due course, restrictions imposed by war circumstances could be removed, it would be seen that they had no need to be ashamed of the progress made during the year, but this was not to be taken as complacency, and they were fully conscious of the need for re-organisation to keep pace with the growing demands made upon the Association. Some discussion of specific activities followed and possible developments of the Special Library Training Courses were reviewed, a special plea being made for the publication of text-books. The report was then presented and carried unanimously.

The Proceedings were then closed.

ASSOCIATION OF SPECIAL LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION BUREAUX.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1943.

Dr.

1942 £ s. d.	EXPENDITURE.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	1943 £ s. d.
	To General Expenditure—			
488 6 2	Salaries	943 15 6		
75 3 2	Rent, Lighting and Telephone	104 8 9		
102 16 8	Printing, Stationery, Postage and Office Expenses	228 7 4		
7 4 8	Insurance	4 4 8		
7 2 3	Reference Books	2 19 11		
2 11 11	Travelling Expenses	2 6 0		
6 10 0	Fire Watching	6 10 0		
5 5 0	Audit Fee	5 5 0		
7 10 0	Depreciation of Furniture and Fittings	7 10 0		
			1305 7 2	
	„ Cost of Publications—			
100 14 0	Book-List	77 7 6		
21 1 0	Bulletin	35 3 0		
2 7 0	War-time Guides	21 12 0		
	Conference Reports	126 10 0		
			260 12 6	
1 1 0	„ Translator's Panel Expenditure		1 1 0	
111 12 2	„ Library Training Course—			
	Lecturers' Fees	76 10 0		
	Sundry Expenses	13 1 10		
			89 11 10	
	„ Conference Expenses		20 4 6	
£937 0 0			£1,676 17 0	

Cr.

1942 £ s. d.	INCOME.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	1943 £ s. d.
	By General Income—			
611 12 6	Membership Subscriptions		715 5 0	
	„ Sales of Publications—			
224 15 11	Book-List—Directories	158 18 9		
34 10 0	War Time Guides	101 2 6		
3 18 2	Other Publications	6 3 3		
19 19 2	Conference Reports	74 15 4		
3 18 3	Miscellaneous	8 9 4		
			349 9 2	
38 6 0	„ Advisory Fee from A.M.S.		330 7 2	
	„ Library Training Course		154 17 6	
	„ Conference	95 9 0		
	Less Fees returnable	7 6 2		
			88 2 10	
	„ Balance, being excess of Expenditure over Income, carried to Balance Sheet		38 15 4	
£937 0 0			£1,676 17 0	

BALANCE SHEET — 30TH JUNE, 1943.

DR.

LIABILITIES.

1942		1943		
£ s. d.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
	SUNDRY CREDITORS:			
48 8 8	Current Expenses	176 14 0		
24 3 0	Subscriptions received in Advance	32 11 0		
131 2 7	Library Training Course Fees received in Advance	47 5 0		
			256 10 0	
	WORKING CAPITAL:			
	As at 30th June, 1942	157 11 10		
157 11 10	*Less* Excess of Expenditure over Income for the year	38 15 4		
			118 16 6	
£361 6 1			£375 6 6	

ASSETS

CR.

1942		1943		
£ s. d.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
150 6 9	CASH AT BANK	67 1 1		
3 13 4	CASH IN HAND	43 6 2		
			110 7 3	
	SUNDRY DEBTORS:			
121 0 0	General	83 5 10		
38 6 0	A.M.S.	128 13 5		
3 0 0	Deposit	3 0 0		
			214 19 3	
	FURNITURE AND FITTINGS:			
45 0 0	As at 30th June, 1942	45 0 0		
5 5 0	Additions	12 10 0		
		57 10 0		
5 5 0	*Less* Depreciation	7 10 0		
			50 0 0	
£361 6 1			£375 6 6	

We have audited the above Balance Sheet and have obtained all the information and explanations we have required. In our opinion such Balance Sheet is properly drawn up so as to exhibit a true and correct view of the Association's affairs, according to the information given to us and as shown by the books of the Association.

Sardinia House, 52, Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.2.
10th August, 1943.

(Signed) WEST & DRAKE, *Chartered Accountants.*

Reports

THE NATIONAL CENTRAL LIBRARY

The National Central Library has continued its normal service to urban, county, university and other libraries, not only by lending books and arranging for the loan of books between one library and another, but also by the supply of bibliographical information. Special work has included assistance to Government Departments, national research associations and other institutions doing research; the loan of educational books to men and women serving in the Forces (at the request of the War Office); the compilation of special book lists for the Prisoners of War Department of the British Red Cross Society; the loan of educational books to aliens in internment camps (at the request of the Home Office); and the loan of books in their own languages, so far as the limited supply has made it possible, to sailors, soldiers, airmen, and civilian refugees from Allied countries.

Work of special interest which, it is hoped, will go a long way towards promoting a better understanding between the American and the British peoples, is that connected with a scheme, sponsored by the Ministry of Information and financed by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, for the supply of a greater number of American books to British public libraries. The scheme is under the direction of a Joint Committee consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Information, the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, the National Central Library, the Publishers' Association, and the Associated Booksellers of Great Britain and Ireland. The National Central Library has had the great advantage of the co-operation of the American Library Association, who have been responsible for the compilation of the list of books, *Interpreting the United States*. Libraries have estimated that they will be able to spend a total of about £22,000 on American books under this scheme.

During the years under review an even larger percentage than usual of the books asked for have entailed a considerable amount of research on the part of the depleted staff of the Library. A few examples may be of interest: (*a*) At 5 p.m. one day a Government Department stated on the telephone that they urgently needed a copy of *Rosenberg's Ballistics*. Exhaustive search in all likely London libraries failed to trace this book. Special letters were therefore sent to a number of libraries in the provinces. In the meantime a book by F. Rausenberger entitled *The theory of the recoil of guns with recoil cylinders* was traced in the National Central Library, and on enquiry the Department stated that that was the book required. It was in the hands of the Department within two days of the original enquiry. (*b*) Another Government Department urgently needed *Jane's Fighting Ships* for 1930. The National Central Library's copy had been destroyed by enemy action and enquiries of many libraries in London failed to trace a copy of the year required. It was only after telephone enquiries of many likely London libraries, and four second-hand booksellers, that a copy was traced. The book was in the hands of the Department within twenty-four hours of the enquiry. (*c*) Another Government Department wanted within twenty-four hours a copy of *The Reichstag Fire Trial*, published in 1934 by the World Committee for the Victims of German Fascism. Enquiries of many London libraries failed to trace a copy, but eventually one was found in the Stepney Public Library and lent within the stipulated time. (*d*) A fourth Government Department needed the fourth edition (1936) of a certain German technical publication. This particular edition was apparently suppressed soon after publication and not allowed out of Germany. In the following edition vital information was omitted. Exhaustive enquiries failed to trace a copy of the book. This is an instance of the expenditure of a good deal of staff time with no corresponding result in the statistics of books issued by the Library.

As in previous years the Library has received much help from Aslib, especially in connection with bibliographical enquiries of a scientific and technical nature.

At a time when access to American books and information about American books has been particularly difficult, the material in the Bureau of American Bibliography has proved even more valuable than in previous years. Owing to the risk of loss in transit, arrangements were made early in 1941 that further cards should be held at the Library of Congress until such time as it might seem safer to send them. The number of cards received in 1941–42 was, therefore, only 27,614, and no cards were received in 1942–43. The total number is now 1,573,864. The additions to the bibliographical books have included the most important publications in that field. As in previous years the whole of the money for the upkeep of the Bureau has generously been provided by the Rockefeller Foundation. The Library of Congress is generously presenting a set of the catalogue cards for bibliographies (a total of about 63,500 cards). The cards will be held by the Library of Congress until after the war. This gift, when the cards are arranged in classified order, will substantially augment the bibliographical material available to the staff of the Library.

CONFERENCE OF ALLIED MINISTERS OF EDUCATION SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT, FILMS AND BOOKS COMMISSIONS AND INTER-ALLIED BOOK CENTRE

The Conference of Allied Ministers of Education was established in the autumn of 1942 by the President of the Board of Education in co-operation with the British Council for the purpose of considering the educational needs of the occupied countries after the war.

The Conference, which meets periodically under Mr. Butler's chairmanship, includes the Ministers of Education of all the Allied Governments, now or formerly in the United Kingdom, representatives of the French National Committee of Liberation and India, and observers from the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., China and the Dominions. The British Council, the Scottish Education Department and the Foreign Office are also represented.

Among matters considered by the Conference have been : What help could be given to the Allied Governments with regard to the various schools established in this country for children from Occupied Europe now resident in the British Isles ; the systematic study and interchange of information between British and Allied teachers on their respective educational methods ; and the drafting of a model Cultural Convention to form the basis of Treaties of Understanding between the Allied nations, with a view to their collaboration in the educational and cultural field, with special provision for the interchange of teaching staffs, the encouragement of studies in each country of the culture of the others, and the mutual recognition of examinations and degrees. Attention has also been paid to the collection of information which would help towards the restitution of artistic treasures pillaged by the enemy. Recommendations have been formulated on the methods of securing restitution after the cessation of hostilities. For current business an Executive Bureau or Committee of the Conference meets fortnightly under the Chairmanship of M. Jules Hoste, Belgian Under-Secretary of State and Education. The British Council supplies the secretariat of the Conference, but it is intended that in due course an inter-allied secretariat should take over from the Council.

The Conference has set up Commissions to consider the supply to Occupied Countries of scientific and laboratory equipment, and of films and other visual aids ; Dr. E. F. Armstrong, F.R.S., is Chairman and Mr. J. G. Crowther is Secretary of the Science Commission, M. Juraj Slavik, Czechoslovak Minister of the Interior, is Chairman of the Films Commission and Mr. Oliver Bell, Director of the British Film Institute, is its Secretary. The co-operation of scientific bodies in this country has been sought, and contact has been established with U.N.R.R.A. in the matter of educational supplies generally.

To promote the supply of books and periodicals to the Occupied Countries after the war, the Conference has set up a Books Commission, under the chairmanship of Professor Sir Ernest Barker. This Commission has empowered a separate committee to deal with history text books, primarily for use in schools. The Committee has recommended publication under the control of independent scholarly boards of Editors, of a History of European Civilisation and a Handbook of suggestions for teachers of history.

The Books Commission is concerned only with the Occupied Countries, and not with the re-education of Germany nor with the provision of books and periodicals for the enemy countries generally.

The Commission is concerned in particular with the restocking of national and university libraries, the provision of books on learned subjects and works of general literature unobtainable in the occupied countries during the war years, and text books for University students and for use in schools. Although dealing chiefly with books published in Great Britain, this Commission's terms of reference are not limited to such books. Orders have been placed for the purchase of British books published during the war years. The provision of periodicals published during the war years is also within its terms of reference.

In addition to the contributions of Governments, a gift of £500 from the Scientific Association of Greeks in Great Britain, on behalf of the Greek University Institutions, towards the cost of books for Greek Universities, was gratefully acknowledged. Through the Conference the Allied governments have offered to replace any books or periodicals in their respective languages in the British museums destroyed by enemy action.

The Conference has agreed to make a certain sum available for expenses in connection with the establishment and conduct of what is to be known as the ' Inter-Allied Book Centre.' A Committee has been appointed to manage the affairs of the Centre. Its members at present are : Professor Sir Ernest Barker (Chairman), Dr. Luxmoore Newcombe, Mr. Edward Carter, Mr. L. R. McColvin, Mr. P. S. J. Welsford, Captain R. Wright, Dr. Jan Opocensky (Czechoslovakia), Mme Maria Danilewicz (Poland), Monsieur Alphonse Als (Luxembourg), Mr. W. R. Richardson (Board of Education) and Mr. Richard Seymour (British Council).

The British Government have agreed to make premises available, and the Ministry of Works is taking steps to acquire such premises. The Committee, which will be known as the " Inter-Allied Book Centre Committee," have secured the services of Mr. B. M. Headicar, former Librarian of the London School of Economics, as Director. The Centre will be used to store books recovered from the salvage drives with a view to their subsequent allocation to libraries in this country and in the Allied countries. It will also contain the books and periodicals purchased by the Conference, will house the Conference staff and will serve as a meeting place for the Bureau and Commissions.

BRITISH UNION CATALOGUE OF PERIODICALS

At the Aslib Conference in November, 1942, following a paper presented by Mr. Theodore Besterman " On a proposed union catalogue of periodicals," Aslib was requested and agreed to consider the possibility of publishing a union catalogue of British and foreign periodical publications on all subjects and of all dates, the location of which is traced in a library in the British Isles. The Aslib Council, therefore, appointed a special Committee, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Luxmoore Newcombe, Librarian of the National Central Library, to consider ways and means of undertaking this project.

The Committee, which included members of the Library Association, the British Museum Staff, the Joint Standing Committee on Library Co-operation and the Science Museum Library, satisfied itself that the project was practicable and that the resulting catalogue would prove an invaluable bibliographical tool. It was estimated that the compilation of the preliminary check-list, prepared from existing union and other lists and catalogues, would take about five years and that this check-list, in itself, would be of the utmost value. Moreover, it was clear that the planning of post-war rehabilitation of British Library services must be based on an assessment of their present holdings, and for this alone the check-list would provide most useful help.

The project was submitted to the Trustees of the Rockefeller Foundation, who have agreed to appropriate, for a period of five years, beginning February 1st, 1944, up to £14,000 to Aslib for the British Union Catalogue of Periodicals. Although the work will remain under the financial and general direction of Aslib, the actual operative control of the production of the catalogue will be in the hands of an Executive Council, representative of the leading British library and bibliographical interests. The first meeting of this Council was held on March 28th, 1944, when Mr. Theodore Besterman was appointed Editor. Work on the compilation of the check-list will begin at once.

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NOTE.—This is not a complete subject index to the contents of the papers, but only to the names of speakers and the titles of papers, etc. Copies of sixteen previous Reports can be obtained from the office of the Association.

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